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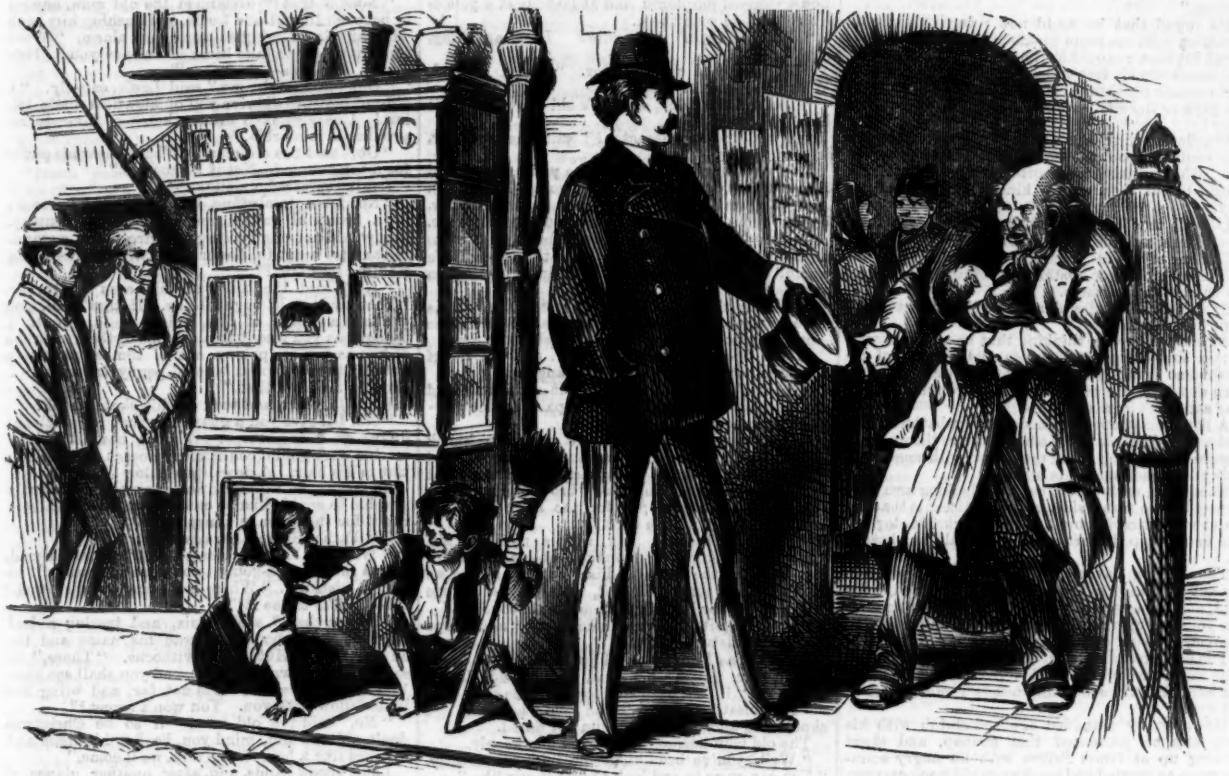
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[A LONDON WAIF.]

LOVE'S CHRISTMAS.

BY
CHARLES GAEVICE,
AUTHOR OF

"Christmas Before and Behind the Curtain," etc.

CHAPTER XV.

He who loves not children
Is possessed of half a heart,
And that not over soft.
Children are the flowers of humanity.

A LOVER of the ordinary type would have owned himself vanquished and accepted the defeat which Miss Newton's refusal signified, but Sir Richard Wildfang was the opposite to a lover of the ordinary type, and mounted his horse with the calmest of calm hearts and rode away with the most assured and contented smile.

Quite placid and unmoved was his face, but within his heart there was a secret spring of malice and hatred which only his marvellous power of repression kept from bubbling over.

At one time he had fallen almost in love with the proud, beautiful girl—almost only, for such men as Sir Richard are incapable of feeling true love in all its fulness and significance; he had admired her beauty, her grace, her fresh, unsullied nature, and he had congratulated himself mentally upon acquiring something more than the money, a sort of make-weight also, when he should make Stella Newton—Lady Wildfang. But now the girl's scorn, her plainly expressed contempt for him, her display of her knowledge of his real character, maddened and galled him. The feeling which Sir Richard had dignified by the name of love was turned to adulterated hate, and as he rode along he thought within his calculating brain:

"Wait till you are my wife, my proud, insolent lady, and I will teach you that it is unwise to show contempt to one who is able to resent and punish it."

With the same smile he rode the next morning through the park. Suddenly, however, his keen eyes discerned a slight, graceful figure which was

ascending the hill and which revealed itself as Mr. Felton's.

Coming up with a lithe, easy swing, his hands thrust into the pockets of his pea-jacket, he looked up, with a smile, frank, genial and friendly, and nodded.

Sir Richard raised his hat and smiled also, with a very fair imitation of the other's frankness.

"Good morning," he said. "Seasonable weather."

"Very," said Mr. Felton, stopping and eying the horse with artistic criticism; "your horse seems to enjoy it."

Sir Richard smiled.

"Yes; he has the best of it to-day. Are you bound for a long walk?"

"I am going to London," replied Louis, frankly.

"Ah," said Sir Richard, "your lawsuit consumes a great deal of your time and attention I daresay." Louis Felton looked up at him with a smile of surprise.

"You know of it?" he said.

"Who does not?" replied Sir Richard. "It is a great case and if you win you will be a rich man, Mr. Felton."

"And if I lose," said the other, good-humouredly,

"I shall scarcely be poorer than I am."

"You will still be master of Heavithorne," said Sir Richard, with a courteous bow.

"A grand position," laughed Louis Felton. "I shall be myself, which is of more consequence."

"Exactly," said Sir Richard, with charming readiness. "By the way, how does my old servant suit you?"

"Very well," replied the other. "He is a good servant, I think, though rough, as you warned me he would be."

"Yes," said Sir Richard. "An honest fellow, no doubt, but a perfect bear."

"Perfect bears are not always unbearable," remarked Louis, with a laugh.

And Sir Richard, laughing also, in the very pleasant manner, exchanged adieux and rode off.

"Going to London," he muttered. "Poor idiot! He looks as happy as a child, and, like a child, thinks that all the world lies before him. My un-

sophisticated friend, there is a mine beneath your feet, and I hold the match which, applied to the train, shall be the means of blowing your airy expectations to the high heavens!"

With a malignant smile he touched the horse with his spurs and galloped on.

At the bottom of the hill another figure attracted his attention.

It was that of Stephen Hargrave, plodding along with bent head and sullen gait.

Sir Richard pulled his horse up into a walk, and when he had got up beside the man said, in a low, clear voice, and looking straight ahead of him:

"Don't turn, but listen. I have just parted from him. He is going up to London, and will be out of the way. Come up to the Box to-night, and I will let you in by the side entrance. You understand?"

"Ay," said the man, gruffly, and Sir Richard trotted on again.

Louis Felton walked quickly along in the opposite direction.

His smile was no hollow one; all the world seemed light and happy to him. Life as it appeared to him this morning was a delicious poem.

The air seemed full of love, the birds warbled it in the leafless trees, the sun poured it out upon the crisp landscape, and the skies proclaimed it in cerulean tints and clear, fleecy clouds.

As he walked along he went over the scene of yesterday, went over the delicious, half-whispered words and sweet looks, and glowed with hope and ecstasy.

Never did a journey seem so short, so enjoyable. Even London itself, once so unpictorial and repulsive to the artistic sense, was transformed into something different and better.

Every one he met wore a pleasanter aspect; familiar faces seemed to have grown younger and handsomer.

He was in love, hopefully in love, and saw everything through the rose-coloured spectacles which the sly Cupid had slipped over his eyes.

As Sir Richard had intimated, law business had taken him to town, and there were lawyers to see and legal forms and data to be gone into.

To his artistic nature the whole business was wearisome and distasteful in the extreme, and when the interviews were over he ran from the lawyer's chambers with a sigh of relief, and felt inclined to throw up his hat for very joy.

Little matter how his lawsuit went, whether he were to be rich or poor! Stella, his beautiful darling, was his, and he felt able to take the world by sieges and conquer all its difficulties.

"Now how soon can I get back?" he thought. "I must get back! Every minute seems an age while I am away from the neighbourhood of my darling."

He found that he could not return till late at night, so, with the same glamour upon him, he buttoned his coat round him and set off for a ramble whithersoever his feet and mood might take him.

No matter whither! He could think of his love in the park or the city, in west-end square or east-end alley!

Wandering thus, he reached St. Giles's, his happy face smiling upon the children as they ran across his path, and his hands often dragged from his pocket to put them with a kindly laugh out of his way.

Like all true-hearted men the sculptor was fond of children, and the children knew it.

Not one of the little ones but smiled up at him, and many crowded or obstinately refused to move as his hands touched them.

St. Giles's is full of children, and they, necessarily, kept him there.

At last, as he was thinking that he might as well obtain something more substantial by way of refreshment than his love's dream, and was about to turn out into one of the larger thoroughfares, he was astounded by a strange sight.

A little, misshapen old man, with a battered hat and a long coat, made for a figure thrice the worder's size, came hobbling round the corner, with something bulky buttoned up in his breast.

The figure, with the old hat and the long arm that swung by the man's side, was so noticeable that the artist was attracted by it in a remarkable degree, and even stopped short in his easy walk to observe it.

The old man, having his head bent, apparently in the act of talking to the something he carried in his coat, did not observe the hat, and can up against the younger man as the latter made an ineffectual movement to get out of his way.

The collision was so violent and so unexpected that the dwarf staggered, his battered hat fell off his head, and the something nearly tumbled out of his coat.

However, by a sudden alarmed clutch with his long arm he prevented that mishap, and stood glaring up at Louis Felton with an angry countenance, as gnarled and lined as an old wood carving.

"I am so sorry!" said the young man, stooping and picking up the hat. "It was very clumsy and awkward of me."

The dwarf muttered something, and snatched the hat out of the young man's hand.

As he did so he revealed the something to be a beautiful little boy, whose curly head peeped out from beneath the thick fold of the old coat like a gem from an old jewel-case.

"What a beautiful child!" exclaimed Louis, his artistic eye attracted and charmed. "Oh, I hope I have not hurt him!"

"No, no," said the old man, impatiently. "Just put my hat on, will yer? We ain't neither of us hurt, though we might a' been. We ain't used to human lamp-posts stuck in the middle of the pavement. When you goes to strike a attitude again, young man, just do so on the kerb or in the middle of the road. Hosses ain't got no children to be banged about."

Louis put the hat on as gently as he could—too gently, indeed, for the old man gave it a ram with angry emphasis—and was about to pass on, but the child, who had been gazing up at him with a pair of exquisite blue eyes, chuckled and insisted upon stopping to get a better view.

"Old Father Sam, me want to see."

The old man, who was just trotting on, paled up and jealously pulled the coat a little farther open. "There," he said, in a very much softer voice, "there. Take a good look at him, and let's run on, my angel. He's an orkard, clumsy chap, ain't he?"

"No, he isn't," said the child, thrusting out its tiny hand towards Louis and smiling up at him.

Louis stooped and touched the little hand with tender sympathy.

"Come," he said, "he's forgiven me, you see. What a beautiful child. He's a model!"

The dwarf covered up the little arm jealously, and, with a gruff "good-day," trotted off.

Louis Felton looked after them, with curious interest.

"A grandfather and grandson" he murmured. "How he treasures the little fellow. Who says there is no love amongst the poor?"

He turned to walk on, and saw a little crimson

shoe lying upon the pavement. He picked it up and smiled.

"We are bound to make acquaintance," he said to himself. "Now, I hope the old fellow isn't out of sight, for one lost shoe is as good as a pair, and perhaps he can't well afford to get another. So here goes," and, with the shoe in his hand, he walked quickly in the direction which the dwarf and child had taken.

But the short legs of the old man were nimble though they were crooked, and after going the length of the street without seeing the old man Louis stopped perplexed, and at last asked a policeman if he had seen them.

"Dwarf carryin' a bundle? Lost anything, sir?"

"No," laughed the sculptor. "Found instead. Which way did they go?"

"Up Paradise Alley, sir. It's old Growls and his boy."

"A well-known character?" said the sculptor, interrupting.

"I should think so," smiled the policeman. "Old Sam and his boy are known all through St. Giles's. A regular rum old chap, rough as a nutmeg-grater, but as fond o' the child as a hen is of her chickens. He's afraid to let the air blow upon it, and as to anybody washin' it, why it's more than their life's worth. No. 2, Paradise Alley; first turning on your left."

Thanking the commanding constable, Louis retraced his steps once more, and entered Paradise Alley, sought out No. 2, and knocked at the door.

It was opened almost instantly, and the dwarf appeared with a face flushed with anger.

"What d'ye mean o' knowin' like a postman and awakin' children as if you was paid by the government a purpose? What is it?"

"I am very sorry. I did not mean to knock loudly," said Louis, good-humouredly. "I found this little shoe on the pavement, near the spot where you were standing, and I brought it to you. It would have been a pity for the little fellow to lose such a pretty little boot."

"Oh," said the old man, with a mollified air. "I'm much obliged—we're much obliged. I should say, seein' as the shoe is his; and I'll say as we should a' been sorry to lose it, seein' as how I made it o' purpose for him, and them's his favouriters."

"You are quite welcome," said Louis, "and I hope I have not disturbed him?"

"No, not as I knows on—I don't hear him," said the old man, putting his head on one side like a jacksaw. "He's a beautiful boy, ain't he?"

"The finest I ever saw," said Louis, honestly. "I should beg another look at him if I dared."

The old man hesitated and eyed him keenly.

"Well, you've been kind," he said, reluctantly. "You can come in and look at him if you like."

Louis waited for no warmer invitation, but, following his host's example, trod on tiptoe and entered the little parlour with the red curtains and the smoke-dried canary.

The dwarf noiselessly trotted round the room, and cautiously lifted the counterpane from a little cot, neatly constructed from an egg-box, and with a loving smile of admiration pointed at its occupant.

Nestling in its little bed the child formed a picture sufficiently beautiful to delight an artist's eyes. The sculptor was simply enthralled.

"Exquisite!" he exclaimed. "What a head! Leonardo da Vinci alone could do it justice!"

"I don't know who Lean Lardy Deaf Incey is," said the old man, in a gruff whisper. "But whoever says there's a more beautiful child than my boy departs from the truth."

"He is your boy?" said Louis.

"Mine!" said old Growls, sharply, and with a suspicious glance at the young man's face, still bent towards the child. "Of course he is; whose else would he be?"

"I heard him call you father," mused Louis.

"Old Father Sam," corrected the old man. "You see what name he was to call me; did perplex me considerable. I've known boys as was feared of their fathers, and I didn't want this 'ere precious to be that o' me, so I thought Father Sam 'ud sound more pleasant an' familiar like, more as if we was the best o' friends allus. Then, when I see my grizzled old mug in that glass, I says, 'Go along with you, you impudent old vagabon', you're too old by a hundred years to be his father!' And yet I didn't like to drop it neither, cos you see it sounded so pretty, comin' from his cherry lips, so I taught him to call me Old Father Sam, which, though it do sound like a comic song, is a pleasant, friendly sort o' name."

"And what is his name?" asked Louis.

"Snowdrop Christmas," said the old man.

Louis expressed his surprise.

"A pretty name, but a strange one. Was he christened so?"

"No, he warn't," said the man, sharply. "But that ain't neither here nor there. He's my boy."

ain't he, and I've got the right to call him what I like, so as he don't object, ain't I?"

"Certainly, certainly," agreed Louis, promptly. "And I hope he will grow up to be as great a joy and happiness to you as the day itself is to the whole world."

"Amen," said the old man. "There ain't no fear o' that. Angels don't grow up nothink else. He's a angel, ain't he?"

"He is," said Louis. "I am almost incited, made bold by your kindness, to prefer a request. I am a sculptor; will you let me take him?"

"None o' that!" exclaimed the old man, edging in between the cot and Louis, and pushing him back with an air of mingled anger and alarm. "What right have you to take him? Who are you? He's mine! I'm—his—his father!"

"Oh, you mistake me," said Louis, eagerly. "I don't mean to deprive you of him, dear little fellow! I only want to take a sketch of him—to reproduce it in marble."

"Oh," said the old man. "What! draw his pictur for a tombstone? Not if I knows it."

Louis repressed a smile. "Not for a tombstone, but for a grand house; for a beautiful garden, perhaps, in the country. You would not mind seeing a portrait of him standing amidst beautiful flowers, and within sound of a tinkling fountain?"

"No," said the old man, his eyes glistening. "That's where it ought to be. If that's all, you can take a sketch of him, and carve him out. I thought as you meant to make one of them cherubs of him as you see pokin' out o' tombstones, with nothing to set on, and blowin' penny trumpets. I shouldn't a' liked that."

Louis laughed, and took out his sketch-book.

"No, I'll give you a guarantee that he shall not figure on a tombstone. What a head it is! If marble were gold it could not represent that delicate don't in his hair. A dear little fellow!"

So saying, he rapidly drew a sketch sufficiently graphic to enable him to cut it in marble, and held it out for the old man's inspection.

Old Father Sam was in ecstasies.

"Why, it's his very blessed self!" he exclaimed. "And this 'en's a-going to be done in marble!" he added, wistfully. "Where is it going to be stowed? I'd—I'd like to see it!"

"So you shall," said Louis, and, tearing a leaf from his sketch-book, he wrote his name and the address of the Hat in Howithorne. "There," he said, "comes down in a week, and you shall see him. You know where it is—it is not far, and bring the little fellow with you. You won't forget?"

"No," said the old man, "if so be Christmas don't object—and mind you, he has his likes and dislikes like a humper—why, we'll come."

Louis shook hands, and, after another glance at the child, left the room, placing on the table as he passed round it on tiptoe a five-pound note.

CHAPTER XVI.

Only a picture! only a touch!
Of dead fingers on live heart chords!
Only a remembrance of the past which makes
The present unendurable.

SIR RICHARD was not an idle man, even in his holiday moments. He had set apart a room in the Box for his study, library, counting-house, or whatever he liked to call it, and was at work there, writing and calculating with his usual smooth pliancy, when Stephen Hargrave's signal gave him notice of the man's proximity.

Sir Richard pushed his writing on one side, and softly opened a small door, which served as a means of communication with the small garden at the back.

"Are you there?" he asked.

"Yes," said a man's voice.

And the next moment Mr. Stephen Hargrave entered.

Sir Richard quietly closed the door, and, pointing to a chair near the fire, resumed his own seat and his work as if such a being as Stephen Hargrave never existed.

The man sat in grim silence, staring at the fire for a time with a gloomy, absorbed air.

At last he raised his head, and eyed the calm face of his master.

The glance was a curious one; its elements were made up of a rough sort of gratitude, a grim, ignorant kind of fear, and a slight suspicion of dislike.

Sir Richard, raising his own eyes, met the glance, and, seemingly recalled to a sense of the man's presence, said:

"Well, he has not returned?"

"No," replied Stephen Hargrave, "not yet. He comes by the last train."

Sir Richard consulted his watch.

"Then there is no great time to waste. You are sure he has no suspicion?"

"I am as sure as a man can be, master," was the grim reply.

"None saw you enter the garden?"

Stephen Hargrave shook his head.

"No one."

"That's well," said Sir Richard, with quiet approval. "You cannot be too cautious, remember. Should we rouse his suspicions we fail in the object I have in view. Remember that, and when I send for you take all precautions to reach me unobserved."

The man nodded.

"Has—has Miss Newton spoken with him since the time you told me of?"

"No," said his spy. "He went off by the train this morning, as you know. They have not met since yesterday, when—"

"Yes, yes; I know, you told me," interrupted Sir Richard, with a frown. "Mind they do not meet without your knowing it; you must watch them as keenly as a weasel does a pair of rabbits. When or where they meet you must be near enough to hear what they say. I must—understand me—I must know all their plans."

The man nodded.

"Have you brought the paper?" asked Sir Richard, after a pause, during which Stephen Hargrave stared at the fire with the same settled look of stolid gloom.

Sir Richard had to repeat the question again before it awakened any response, and then it was with a certain dreamy absence of mind that the spy unbuttoned his coat, took a sheet of paper from his pocket and handed it to his principal.

Sir Richard took it, and spreading it out upon the table before him examined it with leisurely scrutiny.

"Are you certain this is his handwriting?" he asked.

"I saw him write it; I cut it out of the book with my own hands. It is his writing, master."

"Good," said Sir Richard. "Now you had better go. Remember, you cannot be too cautious. If you pass me in the road do not touch your hat as you did a few days ago; it may rouse suspicion. Better, if you can do it naturally, say a few ill-natured things about me in the village. You can say what you like, so that you do not unwittingly tell the truth—you understand?"

"I'll say you are a hard master," said the man, raising his dark morose eyes to his master's face.

Sir Richard smiled.

"Certainly; anything of that sort to throw dust in their eyes."

The man rose.

"Stay," said Sir Richard. "You will find a decanter of spirits and a glass on that bureau. Help yourself."

But the man shook his head and put the offer aside, as it were, with a jerk of his rough hand.

"Good night, master," he said.

"Good night, my good Stephen," said Sir Richard.

And the man went silently into the night again.

Sir Richard returned to his desk and took up the sheet of paper.

"A strange fellow," he muttered. "But I can rely upon him. I know that expression so well, it was fear. When a man serves me from gratitude I am not sure of him—gratitude is so unnatural; but when he fears then I feel safe. Now let me see. A good hand, and easy to imitate—notes on art. Bah! He will have something else to think of before I have done with him! Yes, the writing is easy to forge, and the name—let me try."

So saying he pulled a sheet of paper from his stand, and carefully imitated the signature, "Louis Felton" which was carelessly scrawled at the bottom of the sheet before him.

"Easy enough after a little practice," he muttered, examining his handiwork critically. "I wonder there are not more forgeries even than there are; it is so easy—so easy!"

* * * * *

A bright fire was burning in the old dining-room of the Hut. A small and particularly plain supper was set out upon the table, and Stephen Hargrave stood looking down into the flames, waiting for his master.

That he bore that master no hate might have been deduced by the care with which he had made ready for his appearance.

The fire was a welcome, the chair drawn close up to it was a welcome, and Stephen Hargrave's attitude, as he stood listening, was a welcome in its gloomy, abstracted way.

Presently there was a ring at the bell, the door was opened by the lad who served as Stephen Hargrave's assistant, and Louis entered.

Snow was on his coat, and his face was flushed with the exercise and the night-cold.

"Well, Stephen, my man!" he exclaimed, cheerily, shading his eyes from the light of the lamp and fire. "Here I am back at last! What a cheerful room! Why, man, you have all the neatness of a woman. What a glorious fire! Ah, put the coat to dry

somewhere, 'tis saturated with snow. A wild night, but a grand one."

And he sank into the comfortable chair and rubbed his hands over the fire.

Stephen left the room silently and as speechlessly re-entered with a dish of steaming mutton chops.

"Splendid!" exclaimed the hungry Louis, as he drew his chair up to the table. "Cooked to perfection too; Stephen, you are an artist."

Then with all a hungry man's zest he finished the chops, drank two cups of coffee and subsided into the easy-chair again, with a contented, happy look on his face which seemed to set the fire laughing with sympathy.

"Well, and how have things gone? Anything happened?"

"No; what should?" replied Stephen Hargrave, roughly.

"Nothing, while you are here to keep charge, my faithful bear," said Louis, laughing good-naturedly. "I can't think why your late master parted with you, Stephen. He must have cared more for veneer than good stout oak. But," he added, more gently and with a kindly anxiety in his frank, open eyes, "you look more than usual to-night, Stephen; what is the matter? My good fellow, would that I could persuade you that a sorrow shared is decreased one-half. Tell me what lies on your mind, Stephen; I'll help you to be rid of it if I can."

He even in his kind-hearted sympathy laid his hand upon the man's sleeve as he bent to arrange the fire.

Stephen Hargrave shrank from his touch and averted his face.

"Nothing ails me," he said, in his usual sullen way. "What should? Can't a man keep a silent tongue if he likes? You didn't engage me to chatter like a parrot, master."

"No, not to play perpetual mutts, Stephen," replied Louis, gently. "But, there, I'll say no more if my questions pain you. I meant them kindly, my man, believe that; and to-night I feel so happy that a sad face jars upon me. Ah, Stephen, lad, if you tell me what I have seen to-day you'd lose something of your misanthropy! An old man and a child! That is all, and yet what a love! Angela might sing its praises and be guilty of no profanity. I saw them, Stephen, in a gloomy, miserable little room in a dirty, miserable alley, but the room was a Heaven to the old man while his boy—his golden-haired darling, was within it. A deep, tender, true love, and yet somewhat strange. That reminds me; Stephen, fetch my coat, will you?"

Stephen Hargrave finished his work at the fire-place, then, without a word, left the room and brought the coat on his arm; in his hand he carried a tray with some whiskey and hot water.

"Now, now!" said Louis, as he saw the nature of his burden. "What did I tell you? I am not an old man and don't require cosseting, and as for spirits I've enough of my own. There, don't look so glum, man. I'll drink a glass of it to drive the gloom from your honest face. Mix me a glass—weak, mind."

Stephen, with slow movements, poured out the spirit and added the water.

While he did so Louis rose with the coat, took the sketch from his pocket, and carrying it to an easel, took up some crayons and coloured with a quick, practised hand, the hair, the eyes, and the cheek.

The colour gave expression and character to the face, and the young man, with a laugh of admiration, carried it to the table.

"There, Stephen, is not that a fine boy?" he said, holding it up for him to see.

Stephen Hargrave was on his way to the fire with the small kettle in his hand.

Before he set it on the hob he turned his head in obedience to his master's "There!" and looked at the picture.

Suddenly the kettle fell with a dull crash to the ground, an exclamation of anguish and astonishment rang through the room, and Louis turning his head saw his man, Stephen Hargrave, standing, with outstretched hands and a pale face, staring at the picture as if it were a ghost or the face of one long since dead.

"Stephen!" he exclaimed, dropping the sketch. "What ails you, man? Are you ill?—are you—"

"I've dropped the kettle and scalded myself," said Stephen Hargrave, hoarsely. "Couldn't you wait with your pictures and rubbish till I'd done?"

"I'm very sorry," said Louis, disregarding the impertinence of the speech. "My good man, you seem fated to ill-fortune. Here, let me ring for David; he shall go for the doctor. Where did the water fall?"

"Nowhere," was the sullen reply; "nowhere to hurt. I don't want no doctor. I know what to do. Good night."

"Stop!" said Louis. "You must—"

But Stephen Hargrave had taken up the kettle

and left the room, his face turned from his young master and the picture lying face upwards on the table.

(To be continued.)

FELINE SAGACITY.

A LADY of my acquaintance recently related to me the following incident, which I know to be true, and which I deem worthy of record. My friend determined to try the experiment of making companions of a cat and a bird. To this end she took a young kitten and a young canary, and with great care reared them together; and she was successful. After they had grown up the cat might be left in the cage of the bird or the bird, as was more often the case, left to play with the cat about the room, and they manifested great fondness for each other.

One morning, when the lady had left the two mates at play upon the carpet, and had for a moment stepped into an adjoining apartment, she heard a sudden noise which startled her. She hastened back, and was just in season to see the cat seize the canary in her mouth and leap with it upon the table. For a moment the lady was in great distress, not doubting that her favourite bird was doomed; but, observing presently that the cat was gazing fiercely towards the entrance-hall, she turned in that direction, and quickly discovered the cause. The door had been accidentally left open, and a strange cat was crouching on the threshold. After she had driven away the intruder and closed the door her own cat came down from the table, and, having dropped the canary without the least injury, gave expression to her satisfaction in a series of joyous antics, in which the bird readily joined. And from that time the lady thought more of her pets than ever. S. C.

THE DUCHESS'S WATCH.

WHEN Queen Victoria was about thirty years younger than she is now she was inclined to be very exact in the way of business, and more especially in the way of promptness to appointed times and places. Seven years a queen, four years a wife, and three years a mother, she felt probably a more weighty dignity resting upon her than she has felt since. And yet no crust of dignity or royal station could over entirely shut out her innate goodness of heart.

At the time of which we speak the Duchess of Sutherland held the office of Mistress of the Robes to the queen, and on public occasions her position was very near to the royal person, and deemed of great importance. A day and an hour had been appointed for a certain public ceremony in which the queen was to take part. The hour had arrived, and of all the court the duchess alone was absent, and her absence retarded the departure. The queen gave vent more than once to her impatience, and at length, just as she was about to enter her carriage without her first lady of honour, the duchess in breathless haste made her appearance, stammering some faint words of excuse.

"My dear duchess," said the queen, smiling, "I think you must have a bad watch." And as she thus spoke she unloosened from her neck the chain of a magnificent watch which she herself wore and passed it around the neck of Lady Sutherland.

Though given as a present, the lesson conveyed with it made a deep and lively impression. The proud duchess changed colour, and a tear, which she could not repress, fell upon her cheek. On the next day she tendered her resignation, but it was not accepted.

A MARK OF GRATITUDE.—Adelberth Naundorf who claims to be the chief of the Bourbon family, has sent a mark of gratitude to Jules Favre, his advocate in the suit he recently brought before the Paris courts. It consists of a silver wreath of laurel, to which are attached a ribbon of the same metal and a fleur de lys in gold. The ribbon bears the following inscription: "To our excellent friend and noble advocate, Jules Favre. La Haye, 1874. Adelberth de Bourbon." On each side of the wreath the dates 1851-1874 are engraved, recalling the suits brought forward by the Pretender at these two periods. The gift was presented to Jules Favre on a cushion of blue velvet, the whole being enclosed in a rosewood case.

CHEAP WINTER CLOTHING.—In a climate so fickle as that of England the question of clothing is of the greatest importance. We never know what weather to expect, and we are just as likely to require zephyr clothing at Christmas as we are furs and flannels at Midsummer. It is of importance we should have a covering which is warm and at the same time light, and a correspondent of a contemporary calls attention to the fact of the small use made of furs among us.

He thinks the reason of this may possibly be a combination of dealers who are interested in keeping up the price. That warm coats ought to be within the reach of most is evident from the statement that the fur-lined jackets supplied to the officers during

the Crimean War cost 14s. 6d. each. This correspondent remarks, also, that there are enough surplus cats in London to supply such fur-linings by thousands, and in addition he makes an admirable suggestion with regard to providing omnibus drivers, conductors, and cabmen with sheepskin coats. No doubt we neglect the use of fur for garments almost as much as we do feathers. It is true during the last few years sealskin has become fashionable and the comfort of elder-down quilts in winter has been recognized. But both sealskin and elder-down are beyond the reach of any save the well-to-do, and the cheapest, lightest, and most easily obtainable material for warm clothing has not yet met with the attention it deserves to, or the patronage it merits. Few people know the value of paper in this respect. No one knows, unless he has tried it, what a capital railway rug a good-sized newspaper will make, and few people are aware what an excellent substitute for paucity of blankets can be contrived from a selection of our daily contemporaries. It is not generally known that a brown paper lining will make an ordinary coat as serviceable as a great coat, and that an underwaistcoat deftly contrived of the same material is equal in value to a flannel shirt. This is a fact that cannot be too widely known among all classes, for it cannot fail to be useful to the high as well as to the low. The cheapness, the portability, the universality of paper — combined with the fact that you can throw it away when you have done with it — renders the material, as an addition to cheap winter clothing, valuable in the highest degree.

LOVE SONG.

LEAD me, darling, I will follow,
Whatso'er the path you take;
Be it through the darkened hollow,
Or among the tangled brake,
Where the spider hangs her curtain,
And the wild bird builds her nest;
I will follow, sure and certain,
If my hand in yours is pressed.

Lead me, darling, I will follow,
Through the desert, bare and brown;
Up the heights, swift as the swallow,
There to pluck leaves for thy crown.
I will go through dark recesses,
Where the laurel branches twine,
Feasting on thy sweet caresses,
If you clasp my hand in thine.

Clasp my hand then close, my dearest,
Lead me in life's choicest ways,
So the sun of truth may brighten
All our glad, on-coming days.
In my heart, lo! I have throned you,
There to reign, my king of men;
And with truest love have crowned you,
Purer than earth's choicest gems.

E. N.

COINAGE OF JAPAN.—The third annual report of the director of the Japanese Mint states that in the three years since its opening at the beginning of August, 1871, there have been 106,111,048 pieces of money coined (gold, silver, and copper), of the aggregate value of 63,018,863 yen. The director states that the amount of gold coin in circulation in Japan is considered to be equal to about 6s. 6d. per head of the entire population of the country, and it is scarcely probable that any large increase will be necessary. The silver coins in circulation are equal to 1s. 9d. per head, and a considerable increase may be looked for; but this last statement only refers to the new issues from the Mint, and there is, besides, a large amount of silver in circulation of the old currency. The United States official account for 1874 of the value of the pure metal of foreign coins puts the gold "yen of Japan at within a fraction (three-tenths of a cent) of the United States dollar.

WHEN TO PLOUGH AROUND FRUIT TREES.—It must be remembered that the fibres of the trees are like the leaves, annual, and that early in winter most of them die. Ploughing at this season is, therefore, no check to the vitality of the tree, as working the cultivator through the ground in the growing season is. Then this turning down of green material saves the necessity of top-dressing with manure. Some Maryland orchards that have been treated some years on this system lead us to think highly of the plan. Trees that have long stems opposed to hot suns or drying winds become what gardeners call "hide-bound" — that is, the old bark becomes indurated, cannot expand, and the tree suffers much in consequence. Such an evil is usually indicated by gray lichens, which feed on the decaying bark. In these cases a washing of weak lye or of lime water is very useful; indeed, where the bark is healthy, it is bene-

ficial thus to wash the trees, as many eggs of insects are thereby destroyed. The old practice of slitting hide-bound cherry and other trees with a knife had much more sense in it than some of our leading minds are ready to admit.

SCRIPTURE GIANTS.

VARIOUS estimates have been made of the probable height of Goliath and Og. The uncertain element is the cubit used. Goliath's height, six cubits and a span (1 Sam. xvii. 4), has generally been concluded to be from nine feet six inches to twelve feet. Og is commonly supposed to have been rather taller, but the estimate is based on the length of his bedstead, nine cubits (Deut. iii. 11). On this it is quite hazardous to depend. A giant king might pride himself on his stature, and wish to keep up the idea of it by a specially large bedstead of iron.

It seems probable that Goliath was more gigantic than the warriors mentioned as of "the sons of the giants," of "great stature," and the like. Supposing the shekel of brass to be the same as the shekel of iron, Goliath's spear was twice the weight of that of Ishbibebo.

In modern days soldiers of ten feet in height would not be specially valued. Frederick William's army was a master of ridicule rather than of awe. Let us see how far the giants of old differed from them. We now lay no great stress on a few inches in height. Frederick William had some enormous men found for him by the Czar, but we may safely fix his limit at ten feet, a height of which we have few men recorded during the last two thousand years. His guards, however, were individual specimens, in most cases men who from some exceptional cause grew wonderfully; in short, they were overgrown men.

The giants in Scripture were a race, and the difference is very great. It is uncommon to find a man with a stock of vital energy differing greatly from his fellows; that is, those of his race. Consequently, a very tall man is generally rather feeble. In some cases a very well-made tall man may have his arteries and limbs so formed that the work of the heart in pumping the blood to the extremities is less felt than might be supposed. Still men that have shown extraordinary energy (we are not now speaking of single efforts of strength), very active leaders in wars, for example, have, on the whole, been remarkable rather as being short than tall. Napoleon was very short, perhaps five feet four inches. Nelson was very small. Wellington, we believe, hardly five feet eight inches. Peter the Great was short rather than tall. As far as we can learn, Gustavus Adolphus is almost the only great leader that was decidedly tall. Marlborough was a handsome man, but there seems no record of his being actually tall. It may well have been with him as with Louis XIV., of whom we hear that, when stripped of his high heels and wig and laid in his coffin, his attendants could hardly believe that they saw in the little human frame before them the body of "Le Grand Monarque." And William III. was undersized, and his extraordinary opponent, Luxembourg, was a dwarf. Claverhouse was small; so, we believe, was Cromwell.

As, however, there is considerable difficulty in obtaining reliable evidence on such points, we pass at once to what we believe to be the fair conclusion. To judge if a man is overgrown or not — and on this depends his real fitness for severe work — we must hear not only his own height but that of his race generally. An Englishman of the upper classes of five feet ten inches in height need by no means be an overgrown man, but we should suspect a Frenchman of the same stature. To English ears the incident sounds strange of General Bonaparte walking up to a knot of discontented French officers in Egypt, and informing one that his "five feet ten inches" would not prevent his being hanged for mutiny.

A race of giants, then, men who naturally grew to a height of ten feet with vital powers in proportion, would be indeed terrible in the species of war waged between Israel and the Philistines. No wonder if the spies crept past them, feeling they were grasshoppers in their own sight and in that of the giants also. Hence we cannot wonder that God chose individual men to show that under the greatest disadvantages the battle was still the Lord's.

PARENTS.—The paternal character must be highly respected. There will be no domestic blessings without this. There will be no true dignity in the family without this. There will be no real prosperity without this. Parents must occupy their appropriate place; they are the heads of families, and they must be regarded as such. There must be no neglect; no disrespect must be shown there. There must be no contempt of their authority, no indisposition to render obedience. Children must value and honour their parents; else, instead of having a

blessing throughout life, they will be sure to have a curse.

NATURAL HISTORY.—A lecturer on natural history was called upon the other day to pay for a live rabbit he had in a basket in a railway carriage, and which the ticket-collector said he would be charged the same as a dog. The lecturer vainly explained that he was going to use the rabbit in illustration of a lecture in a provincial town; and, indignantly taking a small tortoise from his pocket, said, "You'll be telling me next that this is a dog, and that I must pay for it also." The ticket-taker went for superior orders, and on his return delivered this lecture in natural history: "Cats are dogs, and rabbits are dogs; but a tortoise is a insect."

INGENUITY OF A SPIDER.

A CORRESPONDENT of a contemporary writes that a spider constructed its web in an angle of his garden, the sides of which were attached by long threads to shrubs at the height of nearly three feet from the gravel path beneath. Being much exposed to the wind, the equinoctial gales of last autumn destroyed the web several times.

The ingenious spider now adopted a new contrivance. It secured a conical fragment of gravel, with its larger end upwards, by two cords, one attached to each of its opposite sides, to the apex of its wedge-shaped web, and left it suspended as a moveable weight to be opposed to the effect of such gusts of air as had destroyed the webs previously occupying the same situation.

The spider must have descended to the gravel path for this special object, and, having attached threads to a stone suited to its purpose, must have afterwards raised this by fixing it upon the web, and pulling the weight up to a height of more than two feet from the ground, where it hung suspended by elastic cords.

THE TOMB OF DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

THERE has recently been laid over the grave of the great African explorer, in the nave of Westminster Abbey, a large slab of fine and spotless black marble, containing in plain letters of solid brass the following inscription by Dean Stanley:

Brought by faithful hands
over Land and Sea,
here rests

DAVID LIVINGSTONE,

Missionary

Traveller.

Philanthropist.

Born March 19, 1813,

At Blantyre, Lanarkshire;

Died May 1, 1873.

at Chitambo's Village, Uala,

For 30 years his life was spent

in an unweary effort

to evangelize the native races,

to explore the undiscovered secrets,

to abolish the desolating Slave Trade,

of Central Africa,

Where, with his last words, he wrote,

"All I can add is my solitude is,

May Heaven's rich blessings come down

on every one, American, English, or Turk,

who will help to heal

this open sore of the world!"

On the right-hand side of the above inscription are these words: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice." And on the left is inscribed: "Tantus amor veri, nihil est quod noscere malum quam fluvii causas per secula tanta latentes."

The main part of the inscription is read with the face to the west; the text on the dexter side, taken from the gospel of St. John, is read looking north; and the Latin quotation from Lucan, on the other side, is read with the face to the south. The quotation may be thus rendered literally: "Such is my love of truth there is nothing I would rather know than the causes of the river lying hid for so many centuries," these being the thoughts which the Latin poet attributes to Julius Caesar in regard to the river Nile.

THE FRENCH INDEMNITY.—Some of the French have been crowding over Germany because she is constantly in debt to France — i.e., owes her money for goods received, and has to pay her with the very gold which France sent to Germany when paying the indemnity. From 1871 to 1873 Germany took from France 847,000,000 francs in gold (33,880,000), a sum exceeding by 480,000 francs the all the gold imported into Europe during that period by Australia, Mexico, and California. With this gold Bismarck established the new German coinage, with its new gold piece, the mark, worth 25 francs, or an English sovereign. This same gold is coming back to France in streams, in the shape of ingots, which are converted into 20-franc pieces, and the joy of the French press is great.



[WOMAN AND HER MASTER.]

THE GIPSY PEER,
or,
A SLAVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Ant. : A compact, villainous if thou wilt,
But still a compact.

Beatrice: Fear not ! I will keep
The compact, remembering well
How much the mutual gain.

Heyward's State Secret.

We must for awhile leave Sir Harry Beauchere—now Lord Dalkine—at Wargarth Castle, and Tazoni in the hands of his implacable enemies, to trace the course of events which more nearly affected Lord Raymond, as we will still call him.

The momentous Monday towards which both Sir Harry and Tazoni had so anxiously and eagerly looked arrived.

At nine o'clock Emilia Slade stood before her mirror, gazing with a fixed earnestness upon her pale, thin face. It was well that the looking-glass reflected only her outward self ; had it shown her inner self, its bitterness, its mercilessness, its unworthiness might even then have appalled and turned her from the crooked and dangerous path upon which she was entering. But mirrors are as kind as are polished friends ; they tell us only what we tell them and serenely assure us that all is peace when in reality there is war and the bitterness of war within.

At ten o'clock Lord Raymond was to arrive to accompany her to Horace Denville's chambers in Welbeck Street.

She had an hour's grace, and how did she employ it?

Before her upon the dressing-table stood a small casket.

It was open and within it lay a small heap of letters ; others lay upon the table, where they had dropped from her cold, lifeless hand.

Beside the casket was a small miniature, and at that moment, as the clock struck nine, Miss Emilia's eyes were fixed upon it.

The miniature was the portrait of Horace Denville. The letters were his, and they had power to move the mercenary, scheming woman more than anything else—save the hand that wrote them—in the world.

Mysterious and inscrutable is the heart of the best and worst of us.

Worthless Emilia Slade, in her heart of heart—that sanctuary which no one had looked into—loved the still more worthless adventurer, who had been

her accomplice, her confidant—in turns her dupe and her master, but never her lover.

In an hour she would lose all chance of becoming his, in an hour—

She sighed, gathered up the letters and tossed them into the casket with a bitter smile.

"All this I pay to be Lady Raymond Hursley in the present and future Countess of Northcliffe ! What matters it ? Horace never loved anything but himself, would never have loved me. I am right in making a sacrifice which is no sacrifice at all. Countess of Northcliffe ! Let that console me."

Then she smoothed the lines out of her face, applied the spongin of rouge with her delicate hand, and, arraying herself in a dark silk which showed off her slim figure and now not unpleasing face to their best advantage, quietly descended to the drawing-room to wait the coming of her future lord.

Before she had waited many minutes the door opened and Horace Denville entered.

She started and looked up at him with an expression of apprehension.

"Pshaw ! " he said, answering it with rallying smile. " Getting nervous, my Milly, now that the eleventh hour has come ? "

"No," she faltered ; "but I did not expect you."

"Nor did I expect to come, but I thought it safer. Milly, mind you must play your part very carefully."

"He suspects ?" she said, paling beneath her rouge.

"Nothing," he interrupted ; "but he may if your acting be not done to the life. I have just seen him—left him dressing in a flutter of nervous conceit ! Something has happened to upset his shallow brain, I think. He has just come up from Northcliffe and looks to me as if he had been spending the last days of his liberty in a wild debauch."

Miss Slade shuddered.

"And I am to marry him ! "

"Of course," laughed Mr. Denville, coolly. "You take him as he stands. Lord Raymond is an empty-headed idiot, but he will be an earl. But, there, I did not come to lead your future husband, Milly, but only to warn you."

"Against what ?" she asked.

"Against appearing too confident and trusting. Better be a little nervous and even suspicious—you understand ? The more auspicious you pretend to be the less he will be—you understand ? "

She nodded.

"I understand. Is there anything else ? "

"Well—yes," said Mr. Denville, with a placid smile. "Knowing how uncertain life and the things of this world are, I thought it best, perhaps, for the

first time in my life, to be cautious and business-like."

As he spoke he drew a piece o' parchment from his pocket and quietly unfolded it.

"Inspired by my novel cautionness, I have had a small memorandum drawn up ; it is very simple, merely a properly executed promise to pay."

"Let me see it," she said.

"He laid it down on the table before her.

"I, Emilia Hursley, promise to pay, three months after date, the sum of ten thousand pounds to Horace Denville, as witness my hand and seal." I am not Emilia Hursley," she said.

"Exactly," he remarked. "But you will be in half an hour, you know. If you be not then I have no claim upon you. And you will admit that I have behaved with the most honourable fairness and liberality."

"Ten thousand pounds ! " she murmured.

"Is not much for a future countess," he said, quickly, but moodily.

"But it is a good sum. You have sold me for a fair price, Horace ! "

It was her first word approaching softness towards him, and it suddenly enlightened him as to the state of her feelings.

"What ! " he exclaimed, with a laugh that was the refinement of cruelty. "You do not mean to tell me that you care a straw for my unworthy self ? Poor Emilia ! Well, if I loved you as they say some men can I would not stand in your light ; better Lord Raymond Hursley, the idiot—and future earl, without a thimbleful of love, than Horace Denville, the adventurer, w' h a heartful ! No, no ! we poor people cannot afford the soft passion, Milly. Love is too expensive a luxury. Forget me at once—if you do not you will a month hence, when I am gone to another hemisphere ! "

"You will go ? "

"Like a shot ! " he said, with a flash of his dark, treacherous eyes. "England will be rather hot for me when the truth of this day's little game comes out ! But there is no more time—even for friendly confessions. A quarter of an hour ! I have just time to get back and make the final arrangements ! Mind, play your part as if your life depended on it, as your fortune most assuredly does."

Then he took her cold hand, held it for a moment, looking down upon her with a curious, heartless smile, and, pocketing the document which she had signed, left the room.

In a quarter of an hour a brougham drove up to the door, Lord Raymond alighted, and in another minute stood before her.

She looked up and scanned his face, and shrank back, but imperceptibly.

There was a great change there.

He looked as if he had been drinking deeply and madly.

There was a hunted, restless, suspicious look in his eyes, which did not leave them even as he took her hand, and, in a would-be jovial voice, said, harshly:

"Well, here we are, and time's up! Are you ready? It's ten o'clock. I'm punctual to the moment. How are you?"

She submitted to his embrace and smiled up at him as falsely as ever.

It was no time to draw back; as he had said, time was up.

"I will not be a moment," she said, and left the room.

She entered a few minutes afterwards with her jacket and bonnet on and closely veiled.

Lord Raymond, with the best gallantry that was in him, led her to the brougham.

When they were seated he commenced to talk hurriedly, nervously; and she, fighting for calm, answered him almost at random:

But by the time the carriage had stopped she had regained all her old duplicity, and had commenced to play her part:

"Oh, Raymond!" she murmured. "I am so frightened! I—I—is it all right? You are sure it is all right?"

"Of course it is," he said, almost rapidly, changing colour as she pressed his arm with well-feigned fear. "Of course it is! Keep your courage up; it will soon be over."

"I am so frightened and nervous," she murmured, as, clinging to his arm, she entered the house.

"Come along," said Lord Raymond. "Don't look so frightened. It's all right. You don't think I'd deceive you, do you? I'm a gentleman, I am."

"Yes," she murmured, "forgive me. But it seems so strange."

At the head of the stairs Horace Denville met them.

"It's all right," he said. "You are a little behind your time. Come, Miss Slade, keep up your courage. Any one would think you were going to be buried instead of married, eh, Raymond?" and he winked at Lord Raymond.

Lord Raymond looked back and smiled behind his hat, and so they entered the room.

A gentleman with a surplice on and with a book before him stood at the table and an individual of the clerical species sat near him.

Lord Raymond eyed the pair with a faint gleam of suspicion, but another wink from Mr. Denville quieted any doubts and Miss Emilia seemed nervous and generally dissatisfied, and any fears he had were set at rest.

"It's all ready," said the clerk. "Have you the special licence?"

"Oh, yes, here it is," said Mr. Denville, handing it over, and smiling behind his hand at Lord Raymond, as much as to say, "What an excellent joke it is, and doesn't he do it well?"

Lord Raymond smiled back, and, with a mixture of confidence and nervousness, led Emilia to the table.

The service commenced.

Lord Raymond, as the solemn words fell in measured tones from the calm lips, looked up uneasily, but Mr. Denville, whose eyes were keeping close watch, smiled again, and so kept up a warning gesture of mockery and encouragement until the ceremony was over.

Then the clerk produced a book and said:

"Will you sign here, if you please, ma'am?"

Miss Slade took up the pen and signed her new name with firm, untrebling fingers.

"Now you, if you please, sir," said the man.

"Eh? I—oh! is that necessary?" faltered Lord Raymond, looking at Horace Denville and turning pale.

Horace Denville moved close to him.

"It's only an old account book of mine," he whispered. "You can sign away a dozen times if you like."

Lord Raymond stifled a chuckle, and with a clumsy, quivering hand wrote his name without glancing at the matter which he had attacked.

Then the clergyman smiled, pocketed his fee and his surplice, and was shown out, followed by the clerk, who smiled also as Horace Denville pressed a five-pound note into his hand so ostentatiously that Lord Raymond might see it, and the three arch-plotters were left alone.

Then Mr. Denville shook hands in quite a paternal way with the bride and bridegroom as he called them, and insisted upon having a bottle of rare port opened.

He made Emilia sit down on the sofa while he poured it out, placed Lord Raymond beside her and drank their health, winking with a sardonic smile at Lord Raymond, who smiled back at him and then at the pale woman beside him, then scowled warningly at Mr. Denville and said:

"Well, now you've done the honours we'd better go, eh, Emilia?"

"Yes," she said, averted her gaze and trying to smile.

"And you'll go down to Hastings for a little while and enjoy yourself while poor Horace will be shut up in his smoky chambers," said Mr. Denville, still acting the paternal. "Well, may you be happy, my dear Raymond. And now I must really throw a shoe after you," and he took up a slipper, with the pleasantest smile.

Lord Raymond offered his arm to his bride and then held out his hand.

"Good-bye," he said, with a cunning smile and a side glance at Emilia. "Good-bye. Keep yourself fresh as ever."

"Good-bye," said Mr. Denville; "a pleasant trip to you. Good-bye, Lady Hursley!" and he bent over her hand with a mock bow of respect which amused Lord Raymond immensely.

They turned and passed through the door when Mr. Denville called after them:

"Oh, Raymond, my dear fellow, in your excessive delight you have forgotten that letter you asked me to post."

"Oh, yes," said Lord Raymond, with a sulky smile, "I had quite. Here it is," and he took an envelope and passed it over his shoulder.

"Thanks," said Mr. Denville. "I'll post it for you. Now, mind the slipper."

And as they reached the hall he leant over the balustrade, and, with a sinister smile which would have done credit to Mephistopheles, he threw the slipper after them.

Then he waited until the door had closed upon them and returned to his room.

Flinging himself upon the sofa, he leant back and smiled up at the ceiling with malicious and overpowering enjoyment.

"The supremest moment of my life has just passed! There wants but one other culmination to enable me to write across my career—successful! Oh, Horace, you are the cleverest villain that ever drew breath, and you deserve your reward."

Here he drew the envelope from his pocket, and opening it extracted a cheque, then flung the envelope upon the fire.

"A thousand pounds!" he murmured, looking at it with careful scrutiny. "The mean hornd would have shuffled off without paying me, and thought in his shallow brain that I did not dare to ask, but Horace Denville's not played out so easily! A thousand pounds and ten more in three months' time! And afterwards how many more? Ah! ah! I see a rich harvest springing up from the seed sown to-day! Meanwhile go on and enjoy yourself, monsieur Raymond; the lambs and the calves in the fields little guess the day of reckoning when the butcher comes with the knife to dispel their bright dreams! I shall be the butcher for you, my dear calf, and that soon, I trust! You shall be the calf but another shall be the lamb! Proud Florence, you shall remember the hour when you baffled and spurned that gentlest of creatures, Horace Denville!"

CHAPTER L.

What news from the Baito? Are the argosies returned? With gold and spice, or do fortunes Totter in the balance still?

With what anxiety Florence waited for some communication from her new adviser and helper, Mr. Levy, of Mary Axe, cannot be told.

But day after day passed slowly by and the solicitor, who had seemed so friendly and desirous of serving her, made no sign.

The poor girl began to show marks of the inward struggle, her face was wistfully pale and her eyes restlessly large. The Darteagles too, much to her misery, began to talk of taking her back to Earls-court and placing her under the care of good old Doctor Walton; but as she so earnestly entreated them to remain for awhile they yielded to her wish and made it a condition that she should take more exercise.

This Florence readily agreed to, and every morning she rode in the drive, always wistfully watching the faces she passed in the wild hope that her eyes might light on Tazoni, who was now never from her thoughts.

Every day she called on the medium to whose address she had instructed Mr. Levy to send any communication for her, and at last the woman handed her a letter.

Florence bore it with her to her own room and with trembling fingers opened it. It was very short and brought her but little consolation or assurance of Tazoni's safety.

"DEAR MADAM—I have placed so much of the matter as you wished in the hands of the most experienced man in England, and I have been waiting day by day before writing to you in the hope that I should have something of importance to communicate. But my agent, though he appears to me to

have succeeded in gaining some slight clue, positively refuses to risk his chance of ultimate success by confiding his information to me—or to you direct, and he counsels, with a wisdom which I am compelled to acknowledge, the strictest silence and quietude for the present. I should advise, therefore, that for the present at least the whole conduct of the investigation be left to him.

"I am, madam,

"Your obedient servant,

"JOSEPH LEVY."

Florence read and re-read this, and thought deeply over it; but to what other conclusion could she come than that it would be wise to take an experienced man's advice and leave the solution of the mysterious matter to longer and more astute heads than her own?

With the letter in her bosom she went down to dinner, which that day was a family one, Lady Northcliffe being the only visitor.

As she entered the dining-room both Lady Dartagle and Lady Northcliffe looked up.

"Oh, it is you, Florence," said her mother. "I thought it was your papa; he has not come home yet, and it wants but ten minutes of eight."

"Papa can dress quickly," said Florence, with a smile. "I did not know he was out."

"Yes; he has been out all day," said Lady Dartagle. "I think he has gone down to the city."

"I noticed a number of business-looking envelopes upon the little waiter. I used to dress them so," said Lady Northcliffe. "I think people like ourselves should have nothing to do with gay business save that of our estates. I am sure they are worry enough."

"I am always enunciating the same dogma; but I am sorry to say that ladies' opinions upon business duties are very little attended to. William has a great deal to do all the time. He is a director of so many companies, though why I am sure I do not know. Money, money, I say!"

Eight o'clock struck by the ornate timepiece over her head and started her into another expression of wonder at Lord Dartagle's absence.

"I never knew him to be late for dinner before, excepting on shooting days."

Then they heard the rattle of his lordship's cab outside, and a few minutes afterwards he opened the drawing-room door, and, looking in, said in a weary yet would-be cheerful voice:

"Mary, Ethel, don't wait for me. Have dinner served and I will be down as quickly as possible."

"Oh, yes, we will wait!" said Lady Dartagle.

"No, no," he rejoined, in a tone of impatience quite strange to him.

"Very well," said Lady Dartagle, lovingly obedient, and the ladies went into the dining-room and commenced dinner by themselves.

In about a quarter of an hour Lord Dartagle entered the room, and Florence, whose eyes were quick to note any change in the faces and moods of those she loved, saw that he looked very pale and harassed.

She leant over and kissed him as he sat down, and the earl stroked her hand with a painful, wistful smile which was peculiar to him when he was about to deny her some pleasure which he thought might do her harm.

"You look tired, William," said Lady Dartagle. "Have you been in the city?"

"Yes," he said, without looking up from his soup, and speaking in an absent, constrained way. "I have been in the city—very busy all day, and am very glad to get away from it."

Lady Dartagle took the hint, and all three ladies talked on other matters, striving with affectionate eagerness to dispel his weariness and divert his thoughts.

He ate but little at his dinner, but drank a glass of wine or two with a feverish eagerness, and when he joined the ladies in the drawing-room crossed over to Florence, who was seated in a corner looking at the firelight and thinking, thinking, thinking, and always of the one being who absorbed all her life.

She made room for her father upon the ottoman, and, taking his hand upon her lap, stroked it very much as he had done hers at dinner-time.

Suddenly Lord Dartagle, who had been sitting sternly quiet, said:

"Where has Raymond gone, Ethel?"

"Gone? I do not know," said Lady Northcliffe. "Is he not at the hotel?"

"No," replied Lord Dartagle. "I called there this afternoon and at his club. At the former they told me that he had gone into the country and that his man had packed his portmanteau and travelling-case; and at the latter the hall porter pointed to the letters and said that Lord Raymond had not been there for a week and that he had left no instructions for their forwarding."

Lady Northcliffe sighed, with a look of uneasy trouble.

"I am sure I do not know where he has gone; Raymond, as you know, Lord Dartagle, rarely

makes me his confidante. He may have started for Asia Minor or the Arctic Regions."

She spoke with cold bitterness, for very rarely could she consistently speak otherwise when the name of Lord Raymond was mentioned.

"I am his mother," she added, with a sad smile, "but I know less of him and his affairs, his business and his pleasures than any one."

"When did you see him last?" asked Lord Dartagle.

"On the morning we saw that strange, pleasant gentleman to whom Florence introduced me," said Lady Northcliffe, with a lingering sigh.

"Not I," said Florence, quickly, and with a sudden thrill through her whole frame; "mamma did you remember?"

"Yes," said Lady Northcliffe, "I remember, my dear, and I shall never forget him. He made a wonderful impression upon me, and if I had dared to I should have asked you to take me to the cottage he spoke of."

"Dared to?" repeated Lady Dartagle. "Of what were you afraid, Ethel?"

"I know not," said Lady Northcliffe, with a strange, wistful look before her, as if her eyes were thinking. "I want to see him, and yet his face and his voice produced such a strange sensation upon me that I almost dread to."

"Of whom are you speaking?" asked Lord Dartagle.

"Of Frank Forest, the poet," said Lady Dartagle.

"Oh," said Lord Dartagle, indifferently. "At that moment a servant entered with a telegram.

Lord Dartagle took it off the writer and looked at it for a moment with dread and apprehension; then, as if nervously for the worst, rose from his chair, and, placing himself with his back to the eyes that watched him with loving anxiety, tore open the envelope and read the contents. Then he thrust the yellow paper within his waistcoat pocket and came back to the fire.

Florence broke the painful silence which followed by gliding to the piano and commencing Bach's magnificent "Ave Maria," of which her father was passionately fond.

The earl dropped into the chair and shaded his face with his hand.

Almost immediately afterwards the evening post arrived and the footman entered with the letters.

There were several for the earl and one for Lady Northcliffe.

Lord Dartagle left the room with his and Lady Northcliffe, after opening hers, uttered an exclamation of sorrowful surprise.

"Dear Lady Northcliffe, what has happened?" exclaimed Florence, whose unstrung nerves were the first to be affected—"what has happened?"

Lord Northcliffe's eyes filled with tears.

"Marion Smeaton is dead!" she said, in a low, sorrowful voice.

"Dead?" repeated Lady Dartagle.

"Yes, poor Marion!" marvoured Lady Northcliffe, "dear, good, faithful Marion! How cruel of them not to let me know that she was in danger!"

"When did she die, dear?" asked Lady Dartagle.

"Ten days ago," answered Lady Northcliffe. "And they would not tell me anything about it for fear of making me ill! It was cruelly kind of them. I would rather anything had happened to me than that faithful Marion should die alone—"

She took up the letter as she spoke and suddenly looked up with a thankful, grateful expression mingling with her tearful one.

"No, she did not die alone! Thank Heaven for that! Raymond was with her till the last moment and stayed until all the arrangements for the funeral had been made. It was by his orders that I was kept uninformed, the steward says. How thoughtful of him! I am unjust to Raymond—cruelly unjust! He remembered that Marion was his foster-mother, and stayed to comfort her in her last hours!"

"Raymond must have a good heart beneath all his roughness," said Lady Dartagle.

"Yes," said Lady Northcliffe, "and even now perhaps he is on some mission of kindness for me or his father. But, my dear, I must go home tomorrow! I should have liked to have stayed, but I feel that I must go home. There seems no one to look after the place now Marion is dead. Poor Marion!" and with her tears falling fast Lady Northcliffe left the room.

Florence and Lady Dartagle sat for awhile talking about Lord Raymond and the sad, feeble woman who had gone to a better world, and Florence for the first time told her mother what she had heard outside the cottage.

"Poor Marion," said Lady Dartagle. "I am afraid Luke is not a good husband, he does not bear the best character, though Raymond always takes her part if one speaks unfavourably of him. I wonder where Raymond has gone? Do you know

Florence? I often think he tells you more than he does any one else?"

"No," said Florence, shaking her head. "I do not know."

Lord Dartagle entered the room, looking paler and more harassed than when he had left it.

"Was that a letter from Raymond?" he asked, anxiously.

"No," said Lady Dartagle, and then she told him the sad news.

But he, usually the most sympathetic of men, showed little interest, and seemed wholly absorbed by some pressing care and anxiety.

Florence rose very soon and kissed them both.

"I shall go to Lady Northcliffe on my way, mamma," she said.

Lady Dartagle said good night in her usual loving way—she would see Florence again to say another before they retired, but Lord Dartagle was more than usually affectionate, and as she stooped over him he took her face in his hands and looked at it with a sad, wistful intentness, then kissed her and without a word dropped into his old attitude.

Directly the door had closed upon her Lady Dartagle went over to the earl and took his hand.

"William," she said, "you are ill or something has gone wrong; tell me what it is."

He looked up at her with a sad smile.

"I am well enough, my dear," he said; "but something has gone wrong, indeed, and if it do not better itself EarlsCourt is ruined!"

"William!" breathed Lady Dartagle.

"It is true," he added, taking her hand, soothingly. "But do not be alarmed. While there is life there is hope, as the doctors say. Have you any idea where that boy, Raymond, has gone?"

"No," answered Lady Dartagle; "but do not think of him; he is sure to be all right somewhere. Tell me more of this dreadful matter!"

"There is too much to tell, more than you could understand, my dear," said the earl. "Two of the companies in which I have invested large sums of money have broken up, and now worse, far worse, I fear, is about to happen. You remember me telling you of a wonderful copper mine some time ago?"

"Yes," replied Lady Dartagle, with her hands clasped on her lap and her eyes fixed anxiously upon his harassed face.

"Well, this wonderful mine in which everybody believed has shown itself to be like everything else, uncertain. So thoroughly did some of us believe in its fortune-making powers that we invested our all in it. I am a director, and with my brother directors I have invested what now seems to me an enormous amount, and, what is more, I stand liable for a still greater sum should the company fail. To-day there has been a meeting—stormy and fearfully confused—the telegram which you saw me read was from the mine agent, who reports that the water has got into the mine, that the works are destroyed, and that unless some almost miraculous relief arrives we must break up. If we do, my dear, your money, Florence's fortune, and all my own almost from EarlsCourt, will be swallowed up. EarlsCourt itself will scarcely be saved if the other shareholders cannot meet their liabilities. Altogether, it is the most fearful cloud that has ever settled upon the house of EarlsCourt since its foundation. To fail, it is a bitter word, and one that should have no personal meaning for me. To fail!"

Lady Dartagle, pale and trembling, stared before her at the fire.

At last she said, in a low, terrified voice:

"Why did you want to see Raymond, William?"

"Can you not guess?" said Lord Dartagle.

"No," said Lady Dartagle.

"He is the only person who can help me," said the earl, in a low, sorrowful voice. "If Lord Northcliffe were well enough I would confide all to him, but it would be worse than cruelly to trouble him in his present state of health. Raymond holds all the power, and will have when he marries a large sum of money."

"When he marries?" said Lady Dartagle, with fresh anxiety, as Lord Dartagle hesitated.

"If he should marry Florence, a union which both of our houses desire," continued Lord Dartagle, "I could go to him and ask him for a loan of the money. I am sure—all of the directors are sure—that the mine will tide round if the money can be brought in to stop the gap. Money is what we want, and money we cannot get, for already the ill tidings have spread, and the shares and stock have gone down. Now, if Florence were married to Raymond, and if they love each other—which you have often assured me they do—I could supply the money, save the mine, my own honour, and my darling's fortune."

"All depends on Raymond?" said Lady Dartagle, musingly.

"All," said Lord Dartagle, emphatically. "I shall not know a moment's easiness until he is within reach. Where he can have gone is a mystery. No one seems to know."

"I will find out," said Lady Dartagle, who seemed to be pondering over some idea. "And when I do I will bring him to town. William, make your mind easy; you shall have the money; I am sure that they love one another, every little thing proves it. When he is away Florence is always gloomy and pale, and when she is away he is always gloomy and abrupt. He is jealous, too, I know. The last time we saw him, a gentleman, Mr. Frank Forest, whom you heard us speaking of, was in the carriage with Florence and Ethel; Raymond was quite angry, and scowled after him with evident jealousy. Oh, I am sure he loves her, and now that he is so steady I feel that I could trust her to him."

Lord Dartagle rose.

"I am worn out," he said, "and I hope that it may be as you say. At any rate, whether he proposes for her hand or not I must ask him for the money. The money I must have if the mine is to be saved and Florence's fortune snatched from the fire."

"You shall have it," said Lady Dartagle.

And she spoke with all a woman's confidence in her own powers of persuasion and action.

Meanwhile Lord Raymond was down, not at Hastings, but at a small watering-place near it, with Emilia, his wife.

They were passing under the name of Westworth. Lord Raymond having—to his surprise very easily—persuaded the woman whom he thought he was deceiving that there were urgent objections to their marriage being known.

Very pleasant Lord Raymond would have found that time, no doubt, but for the crushing cares which sat within his bosom all day, and ate and ate at his heart like the demons in the fable.

All day long the words spoken by the dying woman haunted him, all night he saw the villainous figures of Luke, the gamekeeper, beside his bed, and heard his low-born accents proclaim his paternal rights.

All night and all day the sense of the danger which enveloped him and hung at his footstools dogged him with a persistency which at last not even Emilia's cunning smile and fulsome flatteries could dispel.

They had not been there honeymooning, as Emilia called it, more than a week, when he rose one morning and declared that they must return to town.

"To town?" she said, with her usual smile of complaisance mingled with a little curiosity and annoyance. "Why, Raymond, I thought we were to stay here a month?"

"I wish you wouldn't call me Raymond!" he said, sullenly. "You know I'm always telling you to call me Henry! Somebody who knows me will hear you, and the secret will be out."

"Does it matter very much, dear, if it be?" asked Emilia, pouring out his cup of tea, and smiling at him with a smile that was half-contemptuous, had he been acute enough to see it.

"Matter? You don't want to ruin me, do you? I've told you often enough that if it were known that I was down here with you I should be ruined. Besides, haven't you got more sense of—of propriety for yourself? Do you want it to be known?" he added, pettishly and unthinkingly.

"I?" said Emilia, with well-assumed surprise. "Why shouldn't I—your wife?"

"Oh, of course, of course!" he assented, hurriedly and nervously. "But get ready to go up to town to-morrow, for I'm sick of the place—"

"And me, dearest?" said Emilia, raising her brows.

"I didn't say so," he said, coarsely. "There, don't let us have any more talk about it, but get ready."

Emilia watched him as he gulped down his tea and stuck his gaudily slippers upon a chair, and smiled behind her cap, whispering to herself: "Countess of Northcliffe! Countess of Northcliffe!"

It was only by thus reminding herself of the precious things she had bought that she could reconcile herself to the price she had paid for it. Already the bitterness of the yoke was eating into even her small, worldly soul!

But on the morrow they returned to town.

Emilia went back to Norman Road, as Emilia Slade, for a little while longer, and Lord Raymond repaired to his hotel, where he found a letter from Lady Dartagle, requesting him to dine with them as soon as he returned.

"I'll go!" he muttered. "There's no time to lose. I feel like a man standing on a landslip, and I want to get on firm ground. I'll go!"

(To be continued.)

THE VOLUNTEER OFFICERS.—The number of resignations of volunteer officers is said to be becoming serious. No fewer than sixty, including two lieutenant-colonels, two majors, twenty-two captains, and thirty-four subalterns, were sent in during the

last fortnight. Since October 31st, 1874, there have been 122.

ANXIOUS OVERMUCH.—Perhaps we may rightly say that the most miserable people in the world are the very careful ones. You who are so anxious about what shall happen on the morrow that you cannot enjoy the pleasures of to-day; you who have such a peculiar cast of mind that you suspect every star to be a comet, and imagine that there must be a volcano in every grassy mead; you who are more attracted by the spots in the sun than by the sun himself, and more amazed by one scar leaf upon the tree than by the verdure of the woods; you who make more of your troubles than you could do of your joys—you belong to the most miserable of men.

TREVLIAN; ENTOMBED ALIVE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE whole of the scene described in the last few lines of the preceding chapter of our narrative was so short, and burst with such startling swiftness on Reginald Trevylian, that for a time he could hardly realize his situation. It was almost impossible for him to believe that he himself was a prisoner, arrested for the murder of a man he had parted from only a few hours previous, leaving the man in health and strength, or that the large man who sat opposite to him, and who looked quiet and cool—as if arresting a man, and accusing him of being a murderer was an ordinary occurrence—was conveying him to a gaol.

He was utterly powerless, even to think, and was trying to collect his scattered ideas when the cab in which his companion and he were seated stopped, and a thundering succession of raps, given by a strong arm to the hammer of the iron knocker on the gate of Newgate, aroused him to the painful sense that in a few minutes he would be herding with the lowest of his kind, the scum of humanity.

"Here's a good un for you," said the detective, who had accompanied Reginald inside the cab, speaking to the turnkey, as the latter functionary stood holding the door of the cell into which the prisoner was to be locked for the night.

The man looked hard in Reginald's face, then at his clothes, as if in wonder, but did not answer.

As he pulled open the door a little farther a match was held in his hand fell at Reginald's feet. In picking it up he gave a scrutinizing look at the bottom of the prisoner's trousers, and, touching what he looked at, said to the detective:

"Did yo notice this?"

"Notice what?" was the reply.

"Look here," said the turnkey, taking hold of the hem of the right leg of Reginald's trousers as he spoke.

The detective stooped down, and as he did so uttered the word:

"Blood!"

"Just that," replied the other, with cool composure, as he let go his hold, and shutting the door of the cell locked it for the night, saying to the prisoner as he did so: "Ye'd better hurry an' turn in afore I'm off wi' the light. Who is he?" inquired the turnkey, in what was meant to be an undertone.

"I can't tell ye that very well; he's something to Sir Ralph Trevylian, his son, or his adopted son. Some says one and some the other; but whichever he is he's murdered the old man."

"A clear case?" inquired the turnkey.

"Beats print; won't take half an hour, jury, judge, and all."

"He'll swing!" suggested the turnkey, in a satisfied sort of tone and way.

"Ay, he'll swing, sure enough, an' too good for 'im. It's enough to bring down the walls o' Newgate to think of all the parties as murders their fathers and their mothers. An' he a real gentleman too," observed the detective. "Not as I sets much store by bein' a gentleman; I sees none worse when once they begins."

All the foregoing conversation took place while the turnkey arranged his lantern in front of the cell into which Reginald had been thrust.

Every word fell like the knell of doom on the ears of the unfortunate captive, who, putting together with the men's words the sentence hurled at him by the detective while arresting him, felt that, innocent as he knew himself to be, the chance of being able to prove himself so was bare enough.

Count Ramouski sat until past midnight listening for the sound of the wheels which would tell him that Sir Reginald Trevylian had arrived in answer to his telegram.

Ethel had suddenly become worse, and the

doctor had twice expressed his anxiety for the presence of her husband.

The welcome sound at last broke the silence of the night, and the count hurried to the castle door to receive the guests so anxiously looked for.

Lovell, who had gone with the coachman to the station, alone made his appearance, entering the hall with a pale and troubled face.

"Where is Sir Reginald?" exclaimed the count, hurriedly, and then added, without waiting for a reply, "What is the matter, Lovell? You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"There is more trouble the matter now, I fear, my lord, than there ever was before. It is reported that Sir Reginald is under arrest in Newgate for the murder of Sir Ralph Trevylian."

"Impossible! Who could have invented such a falsehood?"

"I fear it is too true, my lord. The answer to the telegram came all right in the course of fifteen minutes. There it is."

The count took the telegram and read:

"I will come by the train that leaves London at ten o'clock."

"Well, this is, as you say, all right. Of course he did not come or he would be here now; but this is no reason for supposing the horrible calamity you have just repeated to be true."

"No, my lord, but Wilkins, the guard, came to me on the platform, and said he saw Sir Reginald arrested, and that the first-class passengers were all talking about the murder, and there is no doubt in anybody's mind that Sir Reginald is the murderer. He says that Sir Ralph made a deposition on oath that his adopted son was the murderer. The murder was committed at St. Armand's station. Wilkins spoke to the ticket clerk there, who saw Sir Reginald buy the pistol he shot Sir Ralph with."

Lovell trembled with agitation as he spoke, betraying a degree of interest in Sir Reginald that the count was wholly unable to account for, and would believe if he could.

"Do not trouble yourself thus, my poor fellow," said his master; "I shall go to London to-morrow. Doubtless it will all come out right. Even if Sir Reginald be arrested on suspicion it will be only for a few hours. It is not at all likely he would murder the man that only ten days ago he would not allow to be even imprisoned for trying to murder both his wife and himself. I will go by the second train to-morrow. Tell Roberts to have the phaeton ready in time, and take care that none of the other servants hear anything about this story."

Next morning a telegram arrived from Sir Reginald before the count's departure to overtake the second train.

The telegram ran thus:

"To COUNT RAMOUSKI.—I have been arrested for the murder of Sir Ralph Trevylian. Come to me as quickly as possible, and bring an advocate. The accusation is false. Do not let Ethel hear this, or see any of the public prints."

"REGINALD TREVYLIAN.

"Newgate, 12th October."

The count saw Ethel previous to his departure for London, and told her that both he and Sir Reginald had business of the utmost importance, which would detain them for at least a week.

She was much better, and, as she had not been aware of the telegram sent to Sir Reginald the previous evening, expressed no anxiety, saying:

"I hope it is pleasant business, and that you will both enjoy yourselves."

In three hours after his interview with Ethel Count Ramouski and Mr. Bertram, one of the cleverest lawyers in London, were seated in the felon's cell in Newgate, to which Sir Reginald had been consigned the night before.

Sir Reginald detailed with minuteness each incident which had occurred during his stay at St. Armand's station.

He was examined and cross-examined by the lawyer, whose known face he had looked on mentioned, each word he had heard spoken repeated over.

"Now," said Mr. Bertram, producing a copy of a newspaper published that morning, "I see the murderer was committed between fifteen minutes to five o'clock and exactly the hour the up train for London passes St. Armand's station. This puts all the needful evidence into a cocked hat. All we have to do is to prove that you were in London by four o'clock, and that you did not leave it till ten, the hour of your arrest. Four o'clock was the hour you say you arrived at your destination in town?"

"Yes; that was the hour I arrived at my friend's house."

"Good. You saw your friend at once upon arriving?"

"Yes, immediately."

"Were there any others present, servants or

others, in the interim between half-past four and half-past five?"

"Yes, several."

"Then you are perfectly safe. We have only to prove where you were in London during that time by two witnesses and all accusation against you falls to the ground."

The lawyer's pen was in his hand. He had been jotting down the evidence given by Sir Reginald, and he now said:

"Where did you say you were during this specified time, and who were the persons you saw?"

Reginald did not answer for a second or two. If he answered that question then in the printed evidence of the trial it would appear where he had been, and Neville, the sailor, would thus learn that the countess was still alive, and enraged by the knowledge of the ruse played upon him, would doubtless drag her to his own den. Not to save his life could he consign his refined and sensitive mother to such a fate as becoming the companion of the brutal man whom he had left beating his prostrate foe on the floor of Jim Skelton's beer-shop, his own face swollen with blows and covered with blood.

No, he could never do this. If necessary he would give his life to save her from this fate, but to save himself and consign her to it—no, never. And so he answered the lawyer:

"I cannot tell you where I was at that hour, or whom I saw; yet not the less surely was I in London."

Mr. Bertram and Count Ramouski both stared in blank astonishment as they listened to his words.

"You cannot tell where you were? Then I have no other evidence to go upon. After a moment's pause he said: "You can tell by what train you came to London?"

"Yes, by the half-past three train."

"Who were in the compartment with you? Did you know the other passengers?"

"I did not come to London in a first-class carriage. I took second to avoid Sir Ralph."

The lawyer's face fell; he was evidently beginning to entertain grave doubts as to the veracity of his client.

"You probably knew some of the people whom you travelled with?"

"No, I did not recognize any one. In fact, I was tired with my long walk, and slept during the whole time I was in the carriage."

"At least you saw the guard? You would recognize him, and he would know you again."

"I did not see the guard."

The lawyer seemed at his wits' end.

"Did you see any others lying down as you say you were?"

"Yes, scores of them."

"You wore the same gray suit you have on now?"

"Yes, the same."

The lawyer arose, and, bidding good-bye to his client, left the cell, followed by Count Ramouski. When they were once more in the outer air of the street the count asked:

"What do you think of the case?"

"Oh," said Mr. Bertram, in a cool, careless tone, "he hasn't a leg to stand on. He's the murderer, without doubt!"

"It seems extraordinary, his pertinacity in refusing to tell where he spent those first few hours in London," said the count. "But still I cannot believe that he murdered Sir Ralph, simply from what I told you before. Why should he so determinedly refuse to have the old man taken up for attempting to kill both himself and his wife, and then murder him the first time they meet?"

"Simply because he had made up his mind to take the law into his own hands. The whole thing is as clear to me as possible," replied the lawyer. "He comes to London on no ostensible business. On the way he threatens Sir Ralph and then buys pistols; Sir Ralph is killed; the prisoner cannot tell where he was or whom he met during so many hours, including the time in which the murder was committed. I would not give the toss of a brass farthing for his life. It's a gone case, he'll be hanged as high as Haman."

CHAPTER XXV.

The cell into which they had put Reginald Trevylian was one of those that disgraced humanity fifty years ago—a narrow, dark place, with no other means of obtaining either air or light for the miserable inhabitant than that afforded by a square hole in the door, covered by cross iron bars, the door itself leading into a passage but poorly lit by small windows of coarse glass placed at long distances from each other.

This cell, along with several others in the same part of the prison, had not been used for many long

years, but at the time of which we speak there were extensive repairs going on in some other parts of the building, so they were obliged to resort for a season to the cells so long deemed unfit for human beings.

In this place, then, Reginald Trevylian sat to think over the hard fate which had pursued him for the last six months.

He now felt that his misfortunes had reached a climax, that he could not disguise from himself what the face of his lawyer told him so plainly, that for him in this world there was no hope. And yet he clearly saw in all that had befallen him the law of retribution, the surest in all the world.

He had been his own self-accuser all the twelve long years Sir Ralph had been his prisoner. There was a path constantly pointed out to him by which he might save himself and set his prisoner free; yet he would not listen to the voice within, which ever spoke to him in that deep, low tone. And now, when he would gladly have walked uprightly, his life had suddenly come to an end.

He knew there was only one way to save himself, and that way he would never tread.

And, worst of all, in his own sad fate would be included those who were most dear to him.

His mother must toil on to gain her daily bread. His beloved wife would in all probability by his reputed murder of the proprietor of Trevylian Castle lose her birthright, which would pass to the next heir.

What a life of toil and privation was before the fragile, sensitive Ethel Anneley.

It made him almost mad to think of it. His own death—the death of a felon—the death of a dog—was nothing in comparison to the slow wearing out of body and mind those fair, weak women had to look forward to.

And Ethel—poor Ethel—had to be pointed at all her life long as the wife of a murderer, a parricide. Oh! it was too terrible to contemplate.

The poor young man walked back and forth in his narrow cell in a state little short of despair.

Reginald Trevylian, in his normal condition, would turn aside his foot lest he should crush the crawling worm in his path.

Yet that day he would have willingly imbruted his hands in the blood of wife and mother, thinking he did a righteous act, to save them from the cruel life of penury and scorn to which they were henceforth to be consigned.

And then to drive him to the verge of madness the spirit of evil came and presented to his mind's eye a high gibbet, on which was suspended a limp figure, with head hanging on one side. The cowl had fallen off, showing the great red eyes staring wide with despair, and the red tongue, long and protruding, almost bitten through in the agony of dying, high up in the cold air, with the sleet and hail beating on his defenceless head. And he saw too the sea of upturned faces, each in its own way expressing the detestation and scorn men bear to the parricide.

It was too much for poor human nature. He tossed his arms above his head in an agony of soul, wrung from his heart by a sense of his utter impotency to avoid the fate hanging so surely over his head, and, with a low sigh, sank insensible to the floor.

* * * * *

A week from the time Count Ramouski and Mr. Bertram visited Reginald Trevylian in Newgate he stood before a jury of his countrymen accused of the attempted murder of his adopted father.

He looked round. He was conscious of his own innocence, and he hoped that the truth written on his brow would impress some kind heart in his favour.

He had little hope of an acquittal.

Count Ramouski, in his many visits to the prison, had not failed to impress the truth he was so certain of himself upon Reginald's mind that no power on earth could save him from a shameful death except the disclosure of where and with whom he had spent the afternoon of the eleventh of October.

It was, therefore, with no hope of interesting any one in his own behalf that he gazed so wistfully at the vast multitude around him. No; all that was past; he had schooled himself to meet his fate. It was simply a desire of sympathy from his fellow men—a feeling which must dwell in the breast of all while life is warm within the heart.

Alas! there were no sympathizing looks there. In all that sea of heads there were only faces expressive of abhorrence, reproach, contempt—cold, stony eyes—not one kindly look.

Yet there were faces there that had sat as honoured guests at his table—men and, alas! women, with whom he had held sweet fellowship—those who had called themselves his friends, and who a week ago would have pressed his hand warmly.

Yet now there was not one to say, by word or sign, "Heaven help thee!"—none so poor to do him reverence."

His head swam, his heart sickened. He knew he would be stronger to meet his fate if he could keep his eyes from wandering over that sea of heads.

Once, twice, he tried to fix his eyes on the box in which he stood, the windows of the court—anywhere, away from the stony eyes that seemed, every one of them, fixed on his face; but it was impossible for him to control the intense desire he had to scan that sea of cold, reproachful faces.

One by one, those whom he had known most intimately appeared distinct from the others.

Walgrave and Ferries, who had been his own solicitors for twelve years, were there, with anxious, sinister faces; Mr. Bertram, with a look, half interest half anger; Count Ramouski's face reflecting the feelings which stirred Mr. Bertram.

Reginald Trevylian slowly withdrew his eyes from those who congregated around the judge and jury; they wandered to the right, and there, with swollen nose and blackened eye, appeared the coarse yet handsome face of Neville, the sailor.

The young man started as if stung by an adder. That bloated, low man was his father.

His eyes loathed the sight, yet it had a fascination for him he was powerless to resist. Every feature of the coarse face spoke of unbridled passion freely indulged in, sensuality, intense selfishness, legibly written on brow and eye and mouth.

The sight was sent to strengthen him, and he humbly thanked the Great Father, who had enabled him to hold fast his integrity, and by the sacrificing of himself save his pure mother from becoming the slave of that brutal man.

A murmur in the court recalled him to the present. While he was lost in reverie, evoked by Neville's bloated face, the court had opened. The queen's advocate was reading the declaration of the wounded man in a clear, strong voice.

Reginald Trevylian shuddered as he heard the strong words, which of themselves would be sufficient to condemn him.

"I, Ralph Trevylian, being strong in mind, although weak in body, etc., accuse my adopted son, Reginald Trevylian, of the crime of my murder. He threatened me before he left the train. I stopped at St. Armand to avoid him. I left the 'Royal Arms Inn' at a quarter to five, and wandered into a copse of trees on the side of the railway to await the arrival of the five o'clock train. I had only got to the centre of the copse when I was shot by a revolver, first in the hip and again in the breast. A second after I fell a man whose face I could not see came and turned me over with his foot; I saw the clothes. They as well as the foot belonged to Reginald Trevylian. I heard him say 'Curse him.' I am sure the voice was Reginald Trevylian's."

The Honourable Mr. Spencer came next.

"I heard the young man threaten Sir Ralph Trevylian. The old man complained of his son's ingratitude, said he had taken him from the gutter only to become the bane of his life."

A suppressed murmur of indignation ran through the court.

The host of the "Royal Arms Inn" was the next.

"Sir Ralph had arrived there by the twelve o'clock up train for London, ordered dinner, and said he would rest until four o'clock, then dine, and go on by the five o'clock train. Having dined, he left at a quarter to five, saying he would stroll into the copse to the left of the station, until the train came up. About ten minutes after he went out I heard a shot or two, as if from a revolver, and said to my wife, 'Some of the folks from the Hall is out shooting of rabbits in the copse.' 'Yes,' said she, 'they often does that.' We heard no more until just after the train left, when some children came and said there was a man lying killed in the grove. A lot o' us went to the place, and found the same gentleman as had left the house about twenty minutes before. We carried him to my house, and we saw that he was shot in the hip and the breast. We found the pistol a yard or two from the place where the wounded man lay. Mr. Roberts, the ticket clerk, said he knew the pistol. The wounded man said he was Sir Ralph Trevylian, of Trevylian, and he had been shot by his adopted son."

Joseph Roberts, ticket clerk at St. Armand's station, was next examined.

"A gentleman came into the ticket-office on the 11th of October, and ask when the next train would start for London. I told him in an hour. He bought two pistols from a man who was in the office and wanted to sell them."

The pistol was shown to the witness, which he declared to be one of those bought by the prisoner.

"I noticed the gentleman did not go by the first train. I had seen him go into the grove after he left the office, and I fancied he was still there. I was watching for him, because he had left a letter-case on the ticket window when he took out his pocket-book to pay for the pistols. And, on opening the

letter-case, I saw three letters in it, all of them addressed to Sir Reginald Trevylian. One was a tailor's account, and dated nine months ago. He seemed very glad to buy the pistols. The man only asked a guinea for them, and Sir Reginald gave him two guineas. I saw him go into a second-class carriage of the five o'clock train, about five or ten minutes before the wounded man was found. I did not see his face, but I knew him by his suit of grey clothes and his figure. He came from the direction of the copse, together with another man. I did not observe it was Sir Reginald until the train was just starting, almost in motion; but for that I would have given him his letter-case. Both he and his companion were running, and nearly lost the train by being so late."

The detective who arrested Sir Reginald was the last witness.

"I," said he, "arrested the prisoner at the station just as the ten o'clock night train was starting. I saw him jump from a cab and run towards the train; he was evidently in a great hurry to be off. I found in the prisoner's pocket the fellow pistol which was discovered beside the wounded man. I also saw the mark of blood on his trousers—it is there yet. There is a great deal of blood, as if it had dropped from the wound and settled in the hem. The prisoner bullied a little at first when he was arrested, but he seemed as if he was acting when he pretended to be astonished at hearing of Sir Ralph's murder."

The examination of witnesses for the prosecution was over, and, as there were no witnesses called for the defendant, his advocate got up and said a few weak words.

It was evident the man knew there was no ground for a defence, and that all he could say would be useless.

After this the queen's advocate summed up the case.

There had never been a clearer case made out before the court, and the advocate concluded by hoping that, although Sir Ralph was not yet dead, yet as the physician held out no hopes of his recovery, and even if by a miracle he did recover he would be lame for life, that the prisoner would, for his unnatural crime in attempting to kill the man who had been in the place of a father to him, have to suffer the penalty prescribed by the law.

The jury retired for five minutes, and returned to declare a unanimous verdict of guilty!

Reginald Trevylian heard the awful word and understood its import well. He had expected it, fancied he was prepared to meet it, yet it entered like red-hot iron into his soul. But it could not kill, it could not even make him blind or deaf for one moment.

He never was so painfully conscious of everything around, of all the great eyes that were staring on him from that surging sea of heads.

His head swam; the court, with the sea of heads, the judge and jury, seemed like a great whirlpool, and he the centre.

He felt as if he were falling into a deep abyss, and involuntarily he clung to the edge of the box in which he stood.

A glass of water was offered to him. The sight of the water made him think of the mighty river which was rolling past, and he longed to lay his aching head and fiery eyeballs down in the middle of its bed, that its cool waves might roll over him in peace, hiding him from the sight and ken of his fellow men.

He knew he was waiting for his sentence, and he longed for it to be spoken, hoping against hope that it would strike him dead.

He heard voices talking aloud, yet he could not tell a word they said except one. The sea of faces all spoke it.

The judge and the jurymen all spoke it, not loud, but deep, distinct and clear:

"Guilty!"

Then he seemed to hear the jury reply:

"Guilty!"

The judge repeated and the sentence sounded just:

"Guilty!"

And, worst of all, the sailor, Neville, seemed to point at him with his black and bitten tongue, and say in the same cold voice as the others, but more bitterly:

"Guilty!"

(To be continued.)

NEW THEATRE FOR EDINBURGH.—We understand that the site in the centre of Castle Terrace, Edinburgh, has been acquired for a new theatre and opera-house, combined with an aquarium and winter

garden. The site is about 300 feet in width by 156 in depth, and plans are in the course of preparation.

UTILIZING AN ANCIENT EDIFIC.—A proposal, approved by the Bishop of London, and supported by the parish authorities and the inhabitants generally, has been made to convert the ancient church of St. Michael, Queenhithe, into a national school. The church was built in 1181, was burnt down in the great fire, and was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren. The archives of the parish (still preserved) date back to the time of Edward VI., among which is a churchwarden's book curiously illuminated.

HOW JOHN BUNYAN GOT OUT OF PRISON.

One good act multiplies itself, and goes farther than the well-doer ever knows. A kind deed to a single fugitive released a whole people from persecution, and sent forth from prison the most glorious name in religious literature. Here is the story:

Bunyan was in his day quite a controversial writer, and he was very severe upon the Quakers until he learned that through the intercession of the Quakers he obtained his release from prison. It is a somewhat noteworthy fact, now well authenticated, that Charles II. liberated Quakers and Puritans from confinement through the personal intercession of the Quakers, among whom was Richard Carver, who was mate of the fishing vessel which conveyed the king to France after the famous battle of Worcester, 1651.

This honest Quaker sailor, after twenty years had rolled away, appealed to the king in person in behalf of those who were in prison. When the fugitive king fled for his life this sailor conveyed him on shore.

The vessel was bound for Poole, coast-laden, with two passengers, who passed for merchants running away from their creditors; the fugitive king and Lord Wilmot were landed at Fecamp in Normandy, upon the back of a Quaker, and the vessel recrossed the channel to Poole.

When the honest sailor appeared before His Majesty the king expressed astonishment that he had not previously sought some reward; the sailor replied that he merely had done his duty, and Heaven had rewarded him with peace of mind. "And now, sir, I ask nothing for myself, but that your majesty will do the same for my friends that I did for you—set the poor pious sufferers at liberty, that you may have that peace and satisfaction that always follow good actions." King Charles thereupon pardoned four hundred and seventy-one Quakers, and many Independents and Baptists, among them John Bunyan.

MARLIN MARDUKE.

CHAPTER XXVIL

THE blood gushed out in great jets from the wound in Obel Ling's thigh at every step, and he feared that further exertion would cause him to faint, in which event he knew that the courier would at once abandon him to his fate, so he was determined to compel his assistance while he had the power.

Fry, terrified by the dreadful threats of Ling, bent over, and the latter mounted upon his back, and with a fierce imprecation, bade him hasten on.

With a groan the unfortunate courier staggered on heavily. He indeed resembled the camel in the length of his legs—but not in the strength of his back.

The sand was deep, as was sometimes the mire, and Obel Ling was no very light burden, so that Fry, accustomed though he was to the carrying of heavy mailbags upon his shoulders, found it a very tedious tramp towards the hermit's hat.

But go on he must, and, with a thousand unspoken but profoundly conceived inadilections upon the head of his companion, he trudged on until the deep haying of the hermit's dog gave notice of his arrival before the palisade which surrounded the overturned vessel.

"Who comes?" demanded the hermit, who had hastened forth.

"Seven hundred and thirteen," responded Fry, using the number which was the password for the time agreed upon by Elena and her friend the hermit.

"Ah, it is you, Mr. Fry. But you appear to have a heavy load upon your back," said the hermit, as he opened the gate.

"A load I long to be rid of, by my faith, Master Peter. Come—will you get off, Mr. Ling, or am I to be like Sinbad the Sailor, and carry you until I can find a chance to make you drunk?"

"Ling! Then it is that ugly knave, is it?" asked the hermit.

"In truth it is, sir," replied the spy, as he released his hold upon the courier and stood lame upon one foot. "I am sorely, perchance even mortally

wounded, and my life is sought by Geoffrey Marlin. Besides, sir, I have an important—"

"Oh!" interrupted the hermit, impatiently, "perhaps I would be doing my country good service were I to let you bleed to death, though thereby I would assuredly defraud the hangman. But come in, man, and I will see to your hurts."

"I cannot take a single step, sir, without help," replied the spy.

The courier was amazed at the tone of abased humility used by the spy as he addressed the hermit, but had no time to do more than wonder before the latter turned upon him and bade him assist his late burden into the hut.

The two travellers soon after saw the three enter, the spy leaning upon the courier, and indeed half-carried by him.

But no sooner did Fry perceive the two gentlemen than he cried:

"Hot and hasty search is being made for you, gentlemen, at the inn by Master Reinhard and Sir Geoffrey. Mistress Elena bade me hasten hither and warn you. I had just given Sir Geoffrey a special note from London, whereat he seemed greatly excited and gave the note to Master Reinhard, who, thereupon saluted Sir Geoffrey as 'my lord.' I know that Mistress Elena apprehends instant danger to you gentlemen, or she would not have sent me hither."

"Of course close search will be made for you," remarked the hermit, as he addressed the two gentlemen. "But lie down upon that settle, Obel Ling, and let me see to thy hurt."

The spy, whose visage was very pale and ghastly, sank heavily upon the settle pointed out by the hermit, who then addressed the strange lady, saying:

"Pardon me. I will attend to the cleansing of your face in a moment."

"Courier," said Englemort, "you said that you brought a special note from some one in London to Geoffrey Marduke, and that he gave that note to Reinhard, who, after having read the note, saluted Marduke with the title of 'my lord.' Know you the contents of that note?"

"I do, sir, as Master Reinhard read it aloud, thus: 'The Earl of Huberton died last night,'" replied the courier.

"Great Heaven, is my father dead?" exclaimed Varil, in sudden agitation. "Dead, and his son not present to receive his blessing!"

"Are you, sir, the blessing would not have taken the shape of a curse?" asked the hermit, pausing in his examination of the spy's wounds.

"Attend to the business before you, sir," said Englemort, haughtily.

But Varil made no reply. His usually calm and serene countenance had become convulsed with grief, and a sob broke from his lips as he said, aloud:

"Alas! my father, we parted in anger. Heaven forgive me!"

"Then you are Viscount Varil?" asked Obel Ling, whose keen ears and eyes, despite the painful probing of his wounds by the hermit, had been very attentive to all that passed. "As to the end, your father is dead, you are now Earl of Huberton. You do not remember me, my lord?"

Varil turned his eyes upon the pale and ghastly face of the wounded man, and gazed steadily upon him for a moment, then shook his head.

"It does not matter," remarked the spy, smiling bitterly; "I deserve to be forgotten, even by the mother that bore me."

"Who are you, unfortunate man?" asked Englemort, who had also, in vain endeavoured to remember a face that still bore traces of former manly beauty, though sin and crime and dissipation had made it the mere wreck of what it had been.

"No matter, at least not now," replied the spy, suddenly growing very weak. A spasm of agony distorted his features as he spoke these words, and he added: "There, sir; as you have bound up that wound I pray you examine one in my breast, which pains me fearfully."

He feebly bared his breast as he spoke, and the action revealed a wound which seemed simply a small puncture, yet the hermit shook his head after a glance at it.

"Obel Ling," he said, and still in the tremulous tone of extreme old age, "you have ever been a bad man, but never a coward, I have heard."

"Ah, then you know me, sir!" interrupted the spy, with a startled look.

"I know you."

"Very well, and I know you too, sir," said the spy, with an assumption of haughtiness in his tone. "I have known you but a few hours, or rather but a few hours have passed since I recognized in the hermit of the beach one who was known to me years ago."

"It is a wonder then that you did not inform Geoffrey Marduke," remarked the hermit.

"Perhaps I should had I hated him less," replied the spy. "But how about this wound in my breast, my lord?"

All started with surprise as they heard the spy give this title to the aged hermit, but he said, quickly:

"I am simply Peter the Bearded in Anglesey, no more."

"Pardon me, sir," said the spy. "But about my wound in the breast?"

"It is past all surgery, Obel Ling."

The spy closed his eyes, and a tremor shook his frame, while an expression of despair seized upon his features.

"A priest! I would have a priest!" he gasped. And then, opening his eyes, added, sharply: "But it cannot be! It must not be! I must live to be avenged upon my enemies."

"Think no more of vengeance, Obel Ling," said the hermit. "The ball that made that wound passed through your lung, and you are bleeding to death inwardly, slowly and surely. No surgeon in Europe could save you. You may live for days, or only for a few hours, but die soon you must. Make your peace with Heaven, and think no more of vengeance upon your enemies."

"Have no chance to live? Not one?"

"Not one."

Then followed a pause of several moments, and then Ling said:

"Let me think in peace, and perhaps I may speak of some things which you do not know. I would then there were a priest here that I might confess."

Then with a wild and bitter laugh he added:

"What folly! I have derided religion all my life—believed nothing, cared for nothing, lived like a pagan—nay, worse than a pagan, and now, because my day is done I must whine for a priest. Out upon me for a coward. There, do not gaze upon me, Sir Hermit, or I may forget and make known your name before you desire. 'Twas but a few hours ago that I stole into this abode while you and your dog were away, and here found some things which betrayed your secret to me. Indeed, for weeks I have suspected, and I wonder that Geoffrey Marduke has not. Perhaps your cunning has outwitted him. If not, then you and all here are doomed men. Richard Englemort, Lord Alvin, I know you too, and hated you once—you too, viscount—or perhaps I should call you my lord the earl. Ah, me, I like not to die, yet it is pleasant to die knowing that all the schemes of my enemies are crumbling into shame and death. Say you, Sir Hermit, know you who Kaspar Reinhard is?"

"I do."

"And who she is that is called Elena Reinhard, the beauty of the inn?"

"Very well do I know who the maiden is."

"And of course who Geoffrey Marduke is?"

"Certainly, or I should not be here, Obel Ling."

"And know you a man they call Paul Valentine?"

"I have heard of him, but I do not know him, nor have I ever seen him," replied the hermit.

"But you have seen his fair daughter, the beautiful Zona?"

"No, I have not."

"Ho, then, crushed worm that I am, my tongue may be the first to reveal a precious secret," exclaimed the spy. "And the commandant—you know him? I mean, do you know of his true parentage, for all they say he is the son of Geoffrey Marduke, and though there is that in his face which is not unlike something lofty and noble in the face of fierce Captain Herod."

"I know perfectly well who and what Marlin, the commandant, is. For years my eye has been upon him," replied the hermit.

"If that be true you should take instant measures to save him, for he is perhaps mortally wounded, and is indeed in the hands of Geoffrey Marduke."

"Is that so?" asked the hermit of the courier.

"Yes, sir, it is indeed true. The commandant made a strong attempt to arrest certain parties at the inn; just after sunset, but as his full force did not come up in time he was overpowered and captured. He escaped just in time to save the life, for the time, of Mr. Ling, as a reinforcement arrived at the inn. But as his strongest force, the cavalry, did not come up, he was again overpowered, struck down, captured, and now lies senseless in one of the rooms of the inn."

"Not mortally wounded!"

"I heard one of those who carried him into the inn—so by name Carl Dikeman—say that the honourable commandant was only stunned by a blow upon the head. And as Sir Geoffrey ordered a guard to be placed in the room to see that the commandant should not escape on regaining his consciousness, I

feel confident that he is very far from being mortally wounded."

"But how is it that the company of horse did not obey orders and arrive in Anglesey just at sunset?" demanded the hermit.

"I heard it said," replied the courier, "that Geoffrey Marduke, who is all eyes and ears, had a hint from some quarter of the intended arrests, and so managed it that forged orders in the name of the commandant should reach the captain of the company of horse and send them on a wild-goose chase—"

But here again the baying of the faithful hound warned the hermit that strangers were not very far off.

The true expression of the hermit's features could not be seen under his heavy cap and beard, but Englemort and Vasil mutually thought his step and air had suddenly become very firm and active as he opened the door and left the room.

While the above conversation was passing, and indeed ever since the entrance of the spy, his features had been hidden from the scrutiny of the strange lady reclining upon the bed, as the form of the hermit was between her and Obel Ling. Yet she had twice endeavoured to obtain a view of his countenance, while at times she fixed her eyes with intense eagerness upon the face of Richard Englemort.

When she heard him addressed by that name, with the title of Lord Alvin, by the spy she stifled a scream of surprise and joy, and nearly sprang to her feet.

As the hermit left the room her eyes fell, for the first time, upon the pale face of the spy.

So disfigured and stained were the features of the lady that whatever emotion might have seized them it could not be read through that coating of sand and mire.

As she regained strength and breath after lying down she would have hastened to cleanse her face had she not, in the meantime, recognised, despite the flight of many years, the haughty and stately face and form of Richard Englemort, the noble and handsome features and figure of the graceful Viscount Varil, and even the mysterious hermit, whose real name and rank have yet to be made known to the reader.

The eyes of the two travellers had sometimes glanced carelessly towards the strange lady, but with little speculation as to who and what she might be, for events had succeeded each other so rapidly, and their thoughts had been so busily engaged in their own affairs that they scarcely heeded the presence of this lady.

Even had they done so they would have found their curiosity totally baffled by her involuntary mask of sand and ooze of the beach. Already her hasty hands had concealed the necklace and bracelets which had so attracted the greedy eyes of Kaspar Rheinhard, and her rich robes of black silk and satin were wet and bemuddled from her headlong escape from the inn.

The face of the wounded spy was not turned towards her. Had it been she would have failed to recognize it so soon as she did, for time and crime had vastly altered its expression since she had admired its beauty of mould years before.

But from its position she had a full and excellent view of its strongly marked profile, and she recognized the lofty, intellectual brow, the deep indentation where the curved and well-shaped nose sprang from the brow, the thin, curving lips and the sharp, upturning chin. The front face of the man, in his prime, had been very handsome; the profile had always been sharp and stern.

The strange lady recognized it at once, for the voice of the spy had struck familiarly upon her ear and put her memory upon the right track. She recognized him with a start and a sigh, but made no remark.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

To explain the cause of the last summons for the hermit's attentions to the outside of his abode we must ask the reader to return for a time to the anteroom of the dungeon in which we left Zona and Elena expecting the appearance of some formidable and unknown enemy.

"Patience and courage, Elena," repeated Zona. "We shall soon see what manner of being we are to fight."

The wood of the trap-door was soft, damp and much decayed, no doubt, especially on the lower side, thought Zona, and it would not take long for the unknown to cut a hole through.

The cutting, tearing, rasping sound now became distinctly audible.

It was plain that whatever was beneath the trap-door would soon be visible. It was the hope of the two prisoners that the first opening which the intruder might make would be just large enough to

reveal his character, whether human being or hideous monster of the pit.

Again, their successful resistance against the invader depended upon the advantage which they might gain in the first onset upon the intruder, and ere he could gain complete entrance and footing within the apartment. It was to be believed that his head would be the first part exposed. It might be that upon perceiving their presence and readiness to do battle the invader, human, brute or reptile, would become affrighted and fly.

But then it might be that the cutting and tearing going on so steadily—and all the more terribly because they could not imagine what progress was being made—would finally precipitate the trap-door entire into the pit, so that a single leap would carry the supposed monster into the room.

These and many other fearful surmises vexed the minds of Zona and Elena as they waited and watched. To them it seemed as if hours were slowly passing while they grasped their weapons and waited, though, in fact, but a few minutes were consumed.

Zona again bent down her tall and queenly form to place her ear against the trap. She listened but a moment, then arose and whispered to Elena:

"There are two!"

"Two?" cried Elena.

"Yes, there are two," replied Zona. "One is working immediately under the trap-door, and the other just beyond its edge. I think they intend to cut away the support of above."

"Two! We had very little hope in fearing the attack of one—and now we are menaced by two!" cried Elena, and her imagination was more active than that of her companion she added, with a gasp of terror: "Oh, Zona, what if we are to be assailed in this horrible place by a great swarm of dreadful monsters?"

"That cannot be," replied Zona, in a calm and reassuring tone, "for I have always heard that swarms of insects or great numbers of animals moving together make at least some noise."

She gaped at that instant, for Elena grasped her arm and pointed in dismay at something which had appeared, or rather been thrust through the floor near the trap.

"It is the blade of a knife!" exclaimed Zona. "Those below are human beings, and certainly cannot be our enemies."

The blade of the knife, for such the intrusive object was, had penetrated the torn and splintered floor so as to show about four or five inches from its point. No doubt the hand that dealt that powerful thrust was used with greater force than its owner intended, for the blade remained immovable, as if tightly wedged, for several moments.

At length it began to move to and fro, and soon after vanished.

At the same moment another blade, stout and keen pointed, was thrust up through the floor of the trap, and worked rapidly so as to enlarge the hole.

"They cannot be our enemies," said Zona, "as Kaspar Rheinhard would not have fastened them in the pit. They may be made our friends."

So saying, she knelt near the edge of the trap and rapped smartly upon the door with the hilt of her dagger.

The intruding knife instantly disappeared, and all became silent below.

"You see," exclaimed Zona, "they are alarmed. They are some of the victims of the landlord who are trying to escape."

The hole already made by the knife of the person below the trap-door was about an inch in diameter, and though nothing could be seen through it by Zona it was large enough to be spoken through.

Boldly placing her lips near it, she called out, in a clear, ringing tone:

"Who is there? We are friends to all who are unfortunate."

A voice, which seemed half-stifled, replied, instantly:

"Then, in Heaven's name, let us have air. Who is above?"

"Zona Vultres and Mistress Elena Rheinhard. Shall we let fall the trap?"

"Yes."

Zona and Elena, overjoyed to find that their fears were proved false, ran to the great iron ring and tugged at it stoutly; but though they were able to draw it clear from its socket, so as to show the shaft to which it was attached, the trap-door did not fall.

"Ah!" said Elena, running back to the trap; "there are two small bolts above."

She moved these bolts aside, but the door did not fall, and she and Zona were in despair. The latter hastened to the opening in the floor and said:

"We cannot move the door."

"Pull the ring out as far as it will move," said the voice, "then turn your hand so as to reverse the ring, and the door will fall."

Zona and Elena, eager to obey, flew to the ring again, and in a moment after the heavy trap-door swung down into the yawning pit, sustained only by its hinges.

There was a space of three or four feet between the beams upon which the floor was built and the earth around the mouth of the pit, the latter being immediately beneath the trap-door; and from this space there were thrust out and upwards the head of a man, and two arms, so that his hands grasped the sides of the edge of the opening in the floor, near the angle formed by the meeting of those sides.

The man then raised himself with his hands alone until he was able to gain a firm support with his elbows upon the edges of the opening, when he paused as if exhausted, the lower part of his body suspended over the pit.

The head and face of this man were covered with mire, dust, and dirt, as were his shoulders and breast, as if he had been toiling for some time flat upon his chest, and through narrow, underground passages.

His clothes, wet and soiled beyond all recognition of their original colour, were in rags and rents, torn by nails and jagged stones, as he had toiled to escape from some great peril. His features were indistinguishable beneath the mire and dirt and stains of blood which covered them like a mask.

But from the face, which was terrible from its plight, beamed a pair of keen, flashing and resolute eyes.

Zona and Elena recoiled from this man for an instant, for at first glance he was fearful to look upon, appearing so suddenly from the black mouth of the pit.

"He needs help and must have it, or he will fall back into the pit," said Zona, but recovering her courage. "We are strong, Elena, and can aid him."

With rapid hands they made a kind of rope of the bedclothes. Keeper Rheinhard had thrown upon the floor, and advancing to the man passed it under his arms and around his back, and then knotted it upon his breast.

"Now pull with all your strength," said Zona, "while he raises himself."

Aided by the combined strength of the two girls, the man was soon able to gain a hold upon the floor with his knee, and in a moment after was within the room.

He stood erect for a moment, then staggered as if greatly exhausted and sank down heavily, saying in husky voice as he pointed at the pit:

"There is another one!"

He had scarcely uttered these words when the head and arms of another man appeared from the space between the edge of the pit and the floor above it, repeating thefeat just barely achieved by the first.

This second man was, if such were possible, even more begrimed and torn than the first; but he seemed less exhausted in frame, for after gaining a hold with his elbows he swung himself heavily and safely from the mouth of the pit and stood erect in the room.

Not until then did he cast his eyes on the faces of the two girls; and when he had done so he snatched up some of the bedding, ran to the prostrate man, scrubbed at his face for a moment, so as to remove much of the stain and mire, and aided him to his feet.

As Elena and Zona gazed upon the face thus made at least recognizable the latter exclaimed:

"Great Heaven! It is the commandant!"

While the former cried out, as she sprang towards him:

"Oh, Heaven be thanked! it is Marlin Marduke!"

Little cared she for his wet and soiled garments in the delirium of that moment, but with a wild cry of delight she clasped him in her arms.

Marlin Marduke, for it was he, pressed his lips upon her brow and said:

"Thanks, dear Elena, for your love, but indeed I am sadly bemired."

"Na, na," said he who had emerged from the pit last, "it are nae yourself, comandant, that be siled—it be yer clothes. But who had a thought we shud a met the lasses in ere? Ye see, comandant, they beest like dogs who said sh'd plighted troth wi' Captain Herod, can as Dike myself told ye they beed."

But here it is necessary to explain to the reader how it came about that Marlin and his rough but true-hearted companion entered so unexpectedly the anteroom of the dungeon.

It will be remembered that Geoffrey Marduke left the unconscious commandant in one of the lower rooms of the inn, extended upon a couch and in the keeping of Dikeman and another man, by name Arrows.

The commandant regained his senses soon after the withdrawal of Geoffrey from the apartment, and after staring wildly about for a moment raised himself upon his elbow as if about to rise.



[NO LIGHT BURDEN.]

The solitary lamp burning upon the table showed him the shock-head, heavy face and stout form of Dikeman and also the stupid features and lubberly shape of his companion.

"Lie still, lad," said Dikeman, whose peculiar style of phraseology we need not give literally; "lie there as quiet as a stone, for they say thes be a dead herring."

"Where am I? Is that Dikeman?" demanded two bewildered commandants.

"I be Dikeman, sir, and at your service," replied Dikeman, for his companion, Arrows, being sharp only in name and swift only in his potations, had already fallen asleep and was snoring steadily as if for a wager.

"But where am I?"

"In one of the rooms of Master Rheinhand's inn, sir, a prisoner of the smuggler association, and no doubt ye'll be hanged the morn, or shot or poisoned, sir. It is pity that ye are so weak, or I'd no forgot that ye saved me life more nor once, sir."

"Then we were beaten? I mean the coastguard."

"Lashed into red ribbons, sir, and what's left are skirling over the hills and down the dales. Ah, it are all up, sir, wi' the coastguard now, for ye are just doomed. But sleep, my puir lad, an' forget ye troubles till ye wake agin. It is, as I said, a main pity for true that ye canna stand up and help yersel' sir."

"Then you are ready to aid me?"

"I ha' na forgot that ye saved my life, sir, more than since, and I do na love Sir Geoffrey nor his son, Captain Herod. But ye can na stand on yer feet, an' I can na carry ye on my back, so I see no way in the matter, at least not just now, sir."

"In which room of the inn are we?" demanded Marlin, as he gazed about him.

"That ither manna tell you, sir, sin' mysel' ha' never been in it till now, as I am a mon."

"Neither have I, Dikeman, but one who served me has. I mean the man you call Obel Ling."

"Ah, the spy! They say he be dead, sir."

"It may be, for I saw him struck down early in the last fight. But he has given me a minute description of every part of this house. Is not that a black cross painted upon the wall in the shadow of the curtain behind you, Dikeman? Hold the lamp near it. Ah, it is. Come, if I have never been in this room, at least I know something about it."

"And very little good that can do you, sin' ye canna stand on yer feet, sir. Ye may just as well make up yer mind, sir, to be hanged or to some other expeditives mode of strangulation, and go to sleep."

"But I do not wish to be hanged, Dikeman."

"Ov coarse not, sir."

"And I do not intend to be hanged."

"A very good and sensible intention, na doot, sir."

"And I am not going to be hanged."

"Not if yer worship may be able to help it, av coarse, sir. But gas to sleep, my lad, an' dream that it's all a joke."

"I need sleep, and I will take your advice, Dikeman," said Marlin, who wished to reflect upon all that had been told him by the spy of the secrets of the inn.

Dikeman thought he slept, and gazed pityingly upon him, often shaking his head and muttering:

"It are o' no use to think, for ding my wits if Dikeman, an' he be na idiot, can see how to get the lad out o' this snarl. Sir Geoffrey do mean to ha' his life, for I ha' heard him swear it a thousand times, an' the gangs ha' sworn to slay him if every man of them be hanged for it. Mayhap there may spring up a chance when they take him out o' this house."

Time passed on, during which transpired those scenes and incidents already described, in which Zona and Elena were temporarily rescued from the wrath of the mob, and still Marlin Marduke seemed to be sound asleep.

At length the door was opened, and Geoffrey Marduke appeared, followed by Captain Herod.

"How is it with him Dikeman?" demanded Geoffrey, in his harsh voice.

The sound caused Marlin to turn his face towards the speaker, and their eyes met.

"Ho! so he is in his senses again," said the smuggler chief. "Go without and stand in the hall, Dikeman, and you too, Arrows—what! the rascal is sound asleep. Take note of the fact, Captain Herod, and you too, Dikeman—the penalty for sleeping when on guard is death. Go, Dikeman, and send in four of my men to take this fellow out to be shot. There has been far too much disorder and almost mutiny this night, and some of the rascals need an example."

Arrows is a worthless hound, so let an end be made of him."

Dikeman left the room, and this bloodthirsty ruffian, who maintained his authority over his lesser ruffians only by terrible deeds, turned again to Marlin and said:

"So, young man, how goss it with you?"

The commandant made no reply, but regarded the smuggler with stern and unflinching gaze.

"You are sullen, Marlin, as might be expected," continued Geoffrey, while Captain Herod smiled sneeringly, and plainly exulted in the misfortunes which had overtaken his half-brother. "You are sullen, yet it has ended as it ever ends with all who

dare thwart my plans. Many, many years ago you fled from me. Well, you were gone until only a little more than a year ago, and then back you came, my enemy. I would have made a friend and an ally of you, but you spurned my advances and chose my hate and enmity. You, of course, know your peril now, for your persecution of all who belong to our association has made you familiar with our laws. You must die!"

He spoke in a tone of awful solemnity and gazed pitilessly upon the face of the wounded man. But the eyes of Marlin Marduke remained stern and defiant.

"Even I, your father," said Geoffrey, "cannot save you if I would."

"It is false!" said Marlin, in a scornful tone. "You could save me if you would. But you are not my father—you are my enemy and the enemy of my father."

On hearing this bold and startling speech the face of the smuggler chief became as black as a thundercloud, and for a moment he could not utter a word.

Captain Herod, however, laughed aloud and said:

"Father, do you not see that the fellow is in a delirium? He is not conscious of what he says."

"Geoffrey Marduke knows better," said Marlin, "for that which I say is true. He can save me, and he does not save because I am not his son, but the son of a noble gentleman, who, if he lives, would scorn to be a smuggler—nay, a ruffian like you, Herod Marduke."

"Bah! It is clear that the poor fellow is mad," said Captain Herod, shrugging his shoulders. "That blow upon his temple was too much for him. Why waste time with him? Let us leave him until morning, when he may be sane enough to hear that his beloved Elena is now my betrothed, and that she accepted me in public before all Anglesey."

"That too is false!" cried Marlin, fiercely. "Peace!" commanded Geoffrey, angrily. "He is in no delirium, for his eyes are clear as yours, Herod. Go on, young man—what more have you to say? If I am not your father, pray tell me who is? You do not reply. Are you silent because you are sullen or because you cannot tell? Perhaps you will say that she whom you called mother in your boyhood was not your mother?"

"She was not," replied Marlin.

But at that moment Dikeman returned, followed by four fierce fellows, ready to obey any order that might fall from the bearded lips of fierce and ferocious Geoffrey Marduke.

(To be continued.)



HARD AS OAK.

BY

J. E. MUDDOCK.

CHAPTER XVII.

Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmation strong
As proofs of holy writ. *Shakespeare.*

Out into the darkness of the night went Doctor Ainsleigh, for the winter days in the northern region were short, and darkness fell over the land early. Stray flakes of snow still swirled through the air, and the biting blast of a north-east wind whistled shrilly through the air.

As Robert reached the bottom of the flat and passed into the passage he came into contact with another man, a tall, broad-shouldered personage, whose face was bronzed and upper lip shaded by a heavy moustache, as revealed by the flickering light of a lamp at the end of the court. The stranger wore a large wide-awake hat and an Inverness coat; he was evidently going up the steps that Robert had just come down.

"Really, I beg your pardon, sir," Robert said, politely raising his hat.

"What the deuce is the use of begging a person's pardon when the mischief's done?" growled the stranger. "As you were coming out of the darkness into the light you might have seen me, and avoided the collision if you had kept your eyes about you."

The man spoke with drawling accent, as if he were an American, or by long residence in the States had acquired it. This fact, together with the fellow's want of courtesy, caused Robert to peer into his face more closely. There was nothing extraordinary in it. It was rather a gentlemanly face, and decidedly foreign in its aspect.

"I am bound to tell you, sir, that you are very impolite. The collision was, as far as I am concerned, a pure accident, and one gentleman should not refuse to accept the apology of another in such a case."

"Well, well, I do accept it, and ask your pardon for my rudeness. The fact is I'm out of temper, for I've been roaming about this confounded city for the last hour in search of an address, and if you ask a native a question he immediately asks you another, so I gave up asking in despair."

"You are a stranger then in the town?"

"Yes, I guess I am. I came through from London by the mail train last night. But perhaps you can give me the right track to follow?"

[DOCTOR AND PATIENT.]

The stranger pulled a small notebook from his pocket, and holding it up to the light turned over the leaves until he found the address he was looking for.

"Let me see, 'Mrs. MacGillivray, sixth flat, No. 20, MacGunter Street.' I guess they are all Macs in this part of the world," as he closed the book and restored it to his pocket.

"It's rather a coincidence," remarked Robert. "I have just come from the place."

"I guess I'm in luck's way then at last. It's up these stairs I reckon?"

"Yes, at the top of the building."

"Thank you, stranger, I'm obliged."

And, lifting his hat, the man commenced to mount the first flat, and was speedily lost in the darkness.

There was nothing very extraordinary in this meeting. It was a coincidence — a commonplace one, nothing more.

Robert thought it was just a little curious that he should have stumbled against a stranger, and from London, seeking the very place from which he had come. But he speedily dismissed the subject from his mind, to muse upon something of a pleasanter nature — the conversation that had passed between him and his patient. Did she understand what he had hinted at? he wondered. "Did any such feelings as those which thrilled him move her? Did she like him to be with her? Was she angry when he had kissed her hand?"

These and similar questions took shape and faded again in this foolish young man's brain as with head bent he forged his way against the icy gale.

Occasionally, and only occasionally, for he struggled to keep it down, the thought rose up of his interview with his father, Miss Whimble and his friend Eldon; and of the assurance he had given those three persons that no outward influences had acted upon him in his refusal to marry Ethel Hetheridge, and, further, he remembered very distinctly how he had assured his friend Eldon that only charitable and humane motives induced him to leave London for the distant north.

Yes, the same charitable and humane motives which induced Antony to turn traitor to his country and his vows, that he might sit at the feet of his Cleopatra; that caused Paris to fly with Helen, and reduced Troy to ashes; Leander to brave the dangers of the Hellespont, that he might revel in the charms of his beautiful Hero.

After a walk of over a mile he arrived at the apartments of Mr. Rubini.

"Mr. Rubini is in London, but missus is in," said the woman, who opened the door to his knock.

Robert was chagrined at this information, but after a little reflection decided to see Mrs. Rubini.

He was shown into the parlour, and waited until his patience was well nigh exhausted before the lady put in an appearance.

Mrs. Rubini was singularly coarse and vulgar in appearance. She was stout to repulsiveness, and her face was bloated and greasy. Two fingers on one hand and three on the other up to the first joints were covered with rings, and round her neck she wore a massive gold chain, from which was suspended a very large locket, studded with pearls, and the lobes of her ears were dragged down by circular plates of gold not unlike guineas in appearance.

Mrs. Rubini was a professional, from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet. Every movement, gesture, attitude, stamped her as such. Her face was wrinkled, the eyes small, ferret-like, vicious, the eyebrows bushy and overhanging. Her hair, which was dark and streaked with gray, was screwed up in some dozens of small curl-papers.

She was attired in a short blue skirt and a faded, torn dressing-gown. Her feet, ponderous and unshapely, were encased in well-worn slippers.

Unslightly as the tout ensemble of this woman was now, on the stage she was far from unpleasant looking, if she was not positively attractive. The scores of devices which are used in the profession to enhance charms where they exist, and make them where they do not, were used by her with excellent effect, and being in possession of a magnificent voice she held her own on the lyrical stage against younger and better-favoured persons in point of looks than she was.

But the moral organization of Mrs. Rubini was singularly low.

Though born in England, both her parents were Italian peasants, and she possessed all the fire, the revenge, the treachery which are such marked characteristics of the lower classes in Italy.

She had entered the profession when she was only eight years of age, and at the time of being introduced to the reader she was within three years of half a century.

She had married Rubini for love, if such a holy and refining passion could dwell in a nature like hers.

And Rubini had married her for the money she could earn.

The husband, in his heart, hated the wife, and the wife was jealous of the husband to madness. She watched him with the untiring perseverance of a cat, as it sits at the foot of a tree and out of its half-closed eyes watches the unwary sparrow that flies from bough to bough. And the man's life was rou-

dered miserable by the constant and often unjust accusations that this woman, his wife, preferred against him. He was bad enough in all conscience, but she endeavoured to make him worse.

As she entered the room she expressed sorrow to her visitor for having kept him so long, pleading an engagement as an excuse. But the truth was, Madame Rubini, late as the hour was, had only just got out of bed.

"I have heard of your name before from my husband," she said, as she looked at the card she held in her hand.

"Mr. Rubini, I understand, is away?"

"Yes, he went to London a few days ago, and has not yet returned. In a letter I received from him this morning he informed me he should leave to-night and be here to-morrow."

"Then perhaps it would be as well for me to see him, if he is returning so early, and it will save my troubling you."

"I am not quite ~~conscious~~ if it will, and, as far as the trouble, well, I can tell to that. Am I wrong in supposing that your business is in connection with that—*that apprentice girl of ours*?"

The blood rushed into Robert's face as this humiliating remark was made, and if the speaker had not been a woman a "scandal" might have ensued.

He managed to control his temper and replied:

"If you refer to the young lady who is known as Miss Holmwood, your suspicion is correct. My business is in connection with her."

"Oh, well, it's merely a question of names after all—a difference of opinion, you know. I chance to think of her as a brazen creature, and you—well you know best what you think of her."

"I am bound to say, madam," answered Robert, scornfully, "that you forget yourself, and I must decline to prolong the interview."

He rose with the intention of going, but the woman had no intention of letting him off so easily. He had stirred up bad blood, and the woman's temper, her tongue, stoked to *abolition* feel her power.

"There is no occasion for you to hurry away," she said, "I have no doubt that I shall answer quite as well as my husband, if not better. What is your business?"

She asked this in a most peremptory way, as much as to say that she was quite determined to have an answer.

Robert was in a dilemma. Rude as the woman had been, his refined nature shrank from being discourteous, and yet consideration served to convince him that from what little he had seen of Rubini he could not hope for much better from him, and so he decided to deal with the person present.

"My business may be soon told," he answered, "I am desirous of taking Miss Holmwood back to London."

"Oh, indeed," cried madam, interrupting him before he could make any farther remark. "It strikes me forcibly that your desire is not likely to be gratified, and I think it would but have been common politeness had you inquired if I were willing to accede to such a course."

"If, madam, you would be less impetuous, and patiently listen to what I have to say, there would be a better understanding between us," answered Robert, scarcely able to restrain his disgust for the being he was dealing with. "I am quite aware that she is legally bound to you, and you are therefore justified in retaining her services. But will you permit me to suggest that such servitude cannot but be productive of misery to both parties?"

"You are right," screamed his listener. "The shame-faced creature has already caused mischief enough between me and Rubini, and is likely to cause more."

"If unhappily she has made any unpleasantness between you and your husband, it has been done unwittingly and innocently on her part."

"It is false; she has led him away. Her pretty doll's face has turned his head, and he himself has confessed that she asked him into her room."

Robert rose passionately. It was impossible to control his temper longer. His blood seemed to be on fire.

"Do not dare to sully her character by such a statement again," he cried. "For, although your sex protects you from personal chastisement, which if you were a man I should have no hesitation in inflicting, I will seek redress in a court of law for your foul and cruel statement!"

"Indeed!" sneered Mrs. Rubini, not in the least cowed by the wrath of the young man. "I should like to know by what right you are acting?"

"By the right of a man and a gentleman to protect a helpless lady from shame and insult."

"A helpless lady indeed! A deceitful, treacherous, thing, whose ingratitude is only equalled by her duplicity."

"Since you are determined to add insult to injury

I respectfully decline to hold further conversation with you, madam," Robert said, as he moved towards the door. "If womanly feeling is so dead in your breast that you have neither respect nor consideration for one of your own sex I can hope for nothing from you. You should remember that she is suffering from a very severe injury, and, in her weakened state, any great shock may have a fatal effect."

"And a good job too," was the unfeeling answer "for I can see neither her use nor ornament. And allow me to tell you this, young sir, that ever since you visited the inn in Perth she has not been the same, but seems to have made up her mind to set our authority at defiance. I don't know what influence you possess over the girl, though it is not difficult for me to guess, but I am bound to say that it does not reflect to your credit or honour to have been guilty of teaching her disobedience to her employers, if not something worse."

"Your insinuations are so utterly at variance with truth and respect, madam, that I must wish you good evening."

"Stay a moment; you are certainly not mending your cause by quarrelling with me."

Robert turned back into the room and waited, for her words inspired him with a hope that when she had exhausted her passion he might make terms.

"I have no desire to quarrel with you."

"What position do you stand in to this girl?" she asked, without noticing his last remark.

"The position of a man of honour."

"Twaddle. That is nonsense. Are you a relation?"

"No."

"You have only known the girl since she came to Scotland. That is reason, is it not?"

"Not quite. My acquaintance commenced the night she left London."

"Don't split hairs. I am man enough. What do you consider your position towards her?"

"That of a friend."

"A friend. Bah! I know what that means. Upon whose authority are you acting?"

"The authority of her mother."

"Her mother has no authority. You have arrogated to yourself the authority to deal in this matter, and I do not recognize you. You have poisoned the girl's mind against the profession, and sought to entice her from the lawful custody of her employers. Let me give you a word of advice. Do not interfere in affairs which do not concern you, or you may get yourself into trouble. You are possibly aware that it is a penal offence to tamper with an apprentice. She shall never be released from her engagement to us until her time is up, with my sanction. And you may rest assured, if she has not my sanction, she won't get my husband's. I have not done with her yet."

Poor Robert's heart sank within him at the woman's words, but he failed to catch the significance of the concluding sentence. He regretted now, when too late, that he had allowed her to question him, or rather that he had answered her questions so readily. Further parley with the woman was useless, he saw that; and he determined to see her husband on the morrow. If persuasion failed, threats might accomplish what he desired. One thing he recognized very clearly, he could not remove Miss Holmwood from the legal custody of her guardians without their sanction.

As he went downstairs Mrs. Rubini closed her door with a bang and murmured:

"No, I have not done with the brazen creature yet. Before I've done I'll spoil her beauty and stop her from leading other husbands astray. My face was as fair as hers once. I'll make hers as ugly and coarse as mine is now. I'm jealous of her, and I hate her."

The woman's face, even as she had said, was coarse and ugly, but it was rendered still more so by the diabolical expression upon it as she gave utterance to her threat. When the painters of old depicted jealousy as a huge demon, with frightful horns, and cloven feet, they came very near the truth. For surely if anything on earth can pervert a woman's nature, drying up every fountain of goodness and transforming her to a fiend, it is jealousy.

It is a monster

Begot upon itself, born on itself.

And the feeling which lodged in this woman's breast was cherished against one who was as pure and spotless as the unsullied snow, and was therefore the more monstrous, the more awful in its sin.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Fresh tears

Stood on her cheeks, as doth the honey-dew
Upon a gather'd lily.

Shakespeare.

ROBERT AINSLEIGH, as he wended his way back again, felt, perhaps for the first time in his life,

something of a real sorrow. He had set out with such good intentions, but they had been frustrated in a most unexpected manner. Did he repent of the step he had taken in coming to Scotland? No. As he saw the troubles gathering round that fair young head, which had scarcely yet emerged from the early spring of life, he determined, as became a true Briton, to fight them with the might of a giant. Though as yet he knew nothing of the night-side of existence, he had sufficient power of penetration to see that the gloom was gathering for one whose like never was stamped upon his heart. But he shrank not. He would be to her a true friend, come what might. This was his noble, honourable resolution as he mounted the steps leading to her lodgings.

When he entered the room she was still lying on the sofa, her head turned from him. He thought she was asleep, and crossed lightly to ascertain if it were so. But his astonishment was great on finding that her head was buried in her handkerchief and that she was sobbing hysterically.

He lifted her hand and felt her pulse. It was beating wildly. She had evidently been terribly agitated.

"Miss Holmwood, what's the matter?" he asked, gently, as she gently turned her face towards him.

Her eyes were swollen and red, and her face was pale even to ghostliness.

"Oh, Doctor Ainsleigh," she moaned, "leave me; you are so good, so kind and generous that I have no right to involve you in my sorrow. Go away, I beg of you."

She burst into a fresh fit of weeping, and knowing that it was better to let it have its way, he did not interfere.

He took from his pocket a small flat, leather case, without which he never travelled. It contained two or three lancets, some dressings, plaster, and other odds and ends, likely to be useful in emergencies. He selected a tiny phial filled with an opiate. Pouring a few drops into a wine-glass, he added some water and gave it to her to drink. Then he drew up a chair and sat down to wait until nature, assisted by the draught, should do her work and soothe the ruffled nerves.

Gradually the sobs of the grief-stricken girl became more fitful and came at longer intervals.

She grew calmer.

He had extemporized a shade for the lamp out of a newspaper. The subdued light fell upon the beautiful face that was turned towards him now. Her long rich hair had fallen in wild luxuriance over the end of the sofa.

He had stilled the storm; a calm had come.

She stretched forth her uninjured arm and took his hand. Oh! how his nerves thrilled.

"Doctor Ainsleigh, I think you are spoiling me," she said, softly. "But why did we ever meet?"

His heart set off again trying to race against time.

"I have never before known such kindness and attention as you have shown me. I seem to have no fear of anything when you are here; but I am foolish, stupid, may wicked, and must conquer my feelings."

"What inference was he to draw from these words?" he asked himself, as she paused. "There was one and only one. What were the feelings she must conquer if not love for him? Had she not out of the fulness of her breast, and in the innocence of her nature, confessed as far as she might?"

"What do you mean?" he asked, with a kind of wild eagerness, as though on her answer hung his fate for good or ill. Perhaps it did. "What are these feelings you must struggle against? Do you know that you are entrancing me—placing me in that condition when the language I may use is the language of the heart, and I have no control over it? Do you know, Miss Holmwood, that in your presence I forget everybody else?"

"Everybody?" she whispered, quickly.

"Yes, everybody, even my father. If I am rash, if I offend you by what I am going to say, forgive me, for I am powerless to help myself. But on the honour which has never yet been stained I—I love you!"

They were uttered now—those words that could never be withdrawn without the honour of which he was so proud being defiled.

What effect had they on her? She had turned her face from him, and seemed to be struggling with some great, overwhelming emotion. He had her hand between both of his, he pressed it to his breast and pleaded, earnestly, eloquently.

"Tell me, I beg, that I have not offended you. Do not turn from me, but say that I hold some corner in your heart. What will the world be to me now without you? Perhaps I am forgetting myself; but say one word to give me hope!"

"Oh, Heaven, pity me!" she moaned.

"My darling, tell me, I implore you, what is the matter?"

She turned round now. Her face was drenched with tears, her eyes bloodshot.

"I can give you no hope," she said.

"Heaven help me then!" he cried, passionately.

"And yet I love you," she continued, unflinchingly.

He fell upon his knees, and pressed her head to his breast.

For him, for her, that moment was the one exquisite, unsullied ray of happiness which comes in the lives of all, lasts but a cruelly brief space of time, and then goes—never, never, to come again.

"Heaven bless you for those words," he murmured.

"Ah! told thine arses

Around me, clasp me to thy bosom, Jean
Thy cheek against my fond cheek—shade my breast
With the dark ripples of thy clustering hair,

Can I believe I hold thee in my arms?

Unlocked—for this so much beyond my hopes?

What shall I say to thee? How tell the all love?

To touch thee thus, to hear thy voice is joy

Is transport!

It was a rapturous, unspeakably joyful moment, but it ended.

She shrank from him. She pushed him away. She pressed her hand to her head as if her brain was on fire.

"Go, leave me! You must! you must!" she cried, in her agony. "A little while ago we might have been so happy, but now it can never be. Since you want away a barrier has been raised that for your sake I cannot, dare not pass. You must forget me. Oh, that I were dead!"

She was bewildering him. He began to think she was raving in delirium. What did she mean? Since he went away a barrier had been raised. How, where, and when?

In an instant there dashed through his brain the remembrance of the stranger he had met in the passage. A new light broke upon him. That stranger had been to see her.

"You have seen somebody during my absence?" he said, hurriedly.

"Yes."

"A tall man—foreigner?"

"Yes."

"Has he had anything to do with your desire for me to leave you?"

"Oh, yes! Heaven comfort me."

"Is he a friend or relation?"

"No, no; an utter stranger."

"This is inexplicable to me. I beg that you will give me some explanation."

"I dare not; but you must forget me. We can never be anything to each other."

"Would you have given me hope had I asked before you saw him?"

"Yes."

"For your own sake, then, let me insist upon knowing how this man has influenced you."

"No. By the love which you say you bear for me, by the respect which I know you have, I command you not to ask me, for I cannot—will not, tell you."

She wept as if her heart would break. Her sobs choked her. She could say no more.

He tried to soothe her, but she pushed him away—shrank from his very touch.

It was indeed a mystery. When would it be solved?

Exhausted nature at last yielded to slumber. She slept.

He mixed some medicine for her from his case, wrote how it was to be administered on a slip of paper, and placed it on the table, stooped down and kissed the beautiful pale, wet face, and murmured:

"Heaven keep you from harm, my darling."

He summoned the landlady, and requested her to get Miss Holmwood to bed as soon as possible. Then he went out into the night once more, wended his way wearily to his hotel, his heart like stone—cold and heavy within him.

The shadow had fallen at last.

CHAPTER XIX.

When sorrows come they come not single spies.

But in battalions.

Shakespeare.

This night was weary eve for Robert Ainsleigh. He could not sleep. He had difficulty in restraining his impatience until the morning should come, and he could hurry to see Miss Holmwood.

A hundred conflicting thoughts kept his brain in a whirl as he tossed restlessly on his pillow.

Truly her conduct was a mystery to him—a deep, unfathomable mystery. She had asserted that the man who had visited her was an utter stranger, and yet he had exerted some terrible power over the helpless girl.

"I cannot give her up now," Robert murmured. "She confessed that she loved me, and yet wishes me to leave her. Perhaps after all the affair is not

so serious as it seems, and a little reflection may serve to alter her decision. How I wish the morning would come."

But it came none the quicker for his wishing, though in due course the gray light crept very slowly up the sky, and the great heart of the city throbbed again, and the streams of busy life flowed through the snow-covered streets, as the social machinery of a new day was set in motion.

Having finished his toilet, Robert descended to the breakfast-room.

He had no appetite for his breakfast. He allowed the eggs to go untouched, the bacon to get cold. He was out of sorts. His head ached. He was very anxious to get to Miss Holmwood's lodgings; but it was too early yet.

London papers of the preceding day were lying about.

He took up first one and then another, glanced down the columns, though why it was difficult to say, for he didn't read, his thoughts were too far away, then he threw the papers on one side again, half-angrily, as though they had vexed him.

Presently he found himself again with one in his hand.

He was looking over its pages in a purposeless kind of way, turning the sheets over for the sake of doing so.

Suddenly his eye was arrested. He clutched the paper nervously with both hands, crumpling and breaking it with his grasp.

He was reading now—reading something that caused him to go deathly pale, his vision to become obscured, so that he rubbed his eyes with his knuckles that caused his nostrils to dilate and the lips to compress.

Then he let the paper fall, and leaned back in his chair, and it seemed as if some mighty emotion was surging up within and choking him.

What had affected him, a strong, healthy, fine young man in such a manner? This:

"We regret to announce the death of Stephen Ainsleigh, Esq., M.P., of Ainsleigh Hall, who expired suddenly on Tuesday evening, after a very brief illness. The deceased gentleman was well known as an active and outspoken politician, having represented the borough of Swedstown, where he possessed large estates, for many years. As a philanthropist his name was associated with numerous good works, and he took a deep interest in all that affected the moral and social welfare of the community. Mr. Ainsleigh leaves two sons, one of whom is in the army and at present stationed with his regiment in Bengal, the other, who has been educated for the medical profession, recently passed a very successful examination and was admitted member of the College of Surgeons. We understand that this gentleman was from home at the time of his father's death. Mr. Ainsleigh expired in his library from apoplexy, while arranging some business matters. His upright and honourable career, coupled with extremely tolerant views both as a churchman and politician, had won him the esteem and respect of all classes of society, and his loss will be universally regretted."

He clutched the paper again, and re-read the paragraph as though he was not quite sure if he had understood it. But there it was, unmistakably plain.

The words seem to burn into his brain. His father was dead, and he had had some hand in bringing about or, at any rate, accelerating that death. At least so he thought, not knowing that if any one was guilty of the moral murder of Stephen Ainsleigh that person was Miss Whimble.

Robert was overwhelmed with the great sense of his sorrow. Whether should he fly for sympathy, for sympathy and counsel he must have? Where but to her who held his heart?

He hurried to Miss Holmwood's apartments. He found her very ill, but in better spirits.

She quickly noticed his troubled face, and remarked:

"I have no right to question you, Doctor Ainsleigh, but I fear I am in some measure the cause of your changed looks."

"I have passed a restless night," he answered, "owing to what took place between us, for I am fearful of losing the treasure I have just found, your darling self. But there is another cause as unexpected as it is terrible. My father died suddenly on Tuesday last."

"Your father?" she repeated, in astonishment, as if not quite sure that she had caught his words.

"Yes. And the blow is rendered the more heavy, owing to the fact that we were estranged."

Then he told her—leaving nothing unsaid of his interview with his father, his refusal to marry Ethel Hetheridge, and the consequences of that refusal, and he concluded with saying:

"I stand before you now homeless, and almost

penniless, and in this great sorrow I turn to you for hope and comfort and sympathy. Oh, Miss Holmwood—dare I call you Mary?—do not drive me from you if you have any pity. You have won my love—throw it not away. And, unworthy as I am, I offer you all that man can offer—devotion."

He had taken her hand, and was holding it as he feared that to let it go again would be to lose her. And she, with eyes averted and heart beating wildly, felt the ecstatic thrill of the first-born love of maidenhood.

"What can I say?" she asked.

"Tell me that I do not sue in vain!"

"Oh, Mr. Ainsleigh!"

"Call me Robert, darling."

"Robert," she said, "Robert, I seem to be in a dream, from which I must speedily awake to madness."

"No, no, do not say that. There is joy for us—joy and happiness and peace."

"I am in very great perplexity, I scarcely know what to do. But this I know: You ask for my love. That you have, have had almost from the first day I saw you."

"Ah, is that so?"

"Yes; and is it strange that it should be so? You were the first gentleman I met as I set out in the world. You won my gratitude by your kindness, and is not a woman's gratitude akin to love? When you visited me in Edinburgh to restore my money I was vain enough to think I had impressed you, but when you told me you had done no more than you would have done for anybody else it seemed a rebuke for my vanity; I did feel very disappointed and I determined then not to listen to your solicitations to return home."

"The night before you came to Perth I had a dream. This dream was a stupid, foolish one in the main, though some part of it came true. I thought that you came to see me in the theatre, that you had come because you said you loved me. A quarrel ensued between you and Rubini, and you killed him. Then we fled together—you and I—fled through an endless valley that was illuminated with a blood-red light, and as we sped onwards showers of stones fell around, and a huge phantom pursued and pointed at us with its long fingers."

"You may judge of my surprise when I heard on the following evening that you were in Perth and had taken a box for our performance. I heard it from Rubini. He said you had come through my invitation, and he abused me in a most shameful manner. It was his disgraceful conduct, together with the knowledge that you were in the house, that caused my excitement on the stage and led to my swooning. That night when I got home I began to think I was doing very wrong in permitting your attention, and I determined not to see you in the morning when you called. This determination cost me a deal of sorrow, but I believed that I was doing right. Then you came again, and the feeling that might have died had you remained away is renewed with tenfold force. Oh! Robert, you have won my heart and made me your slave."

She called him Robert. She nestled her head on his breast as if she would make that her shelter for all time. And he, imprinting his warm kisses on her beautiful brow, thought the world had never before produced such a being—a being half so fair as she.

"Darling Mary, I thank you for this confession! My devotion and love shall repay you for your candour. You shall be my wife soon."

"Your wife?" she murmured, abstractedly.

"Yes, darling; why not? I have no fear for the future. My profession will enable me to gain a good position, and we shall be so very happy."

"Your wife," she repeated, as if her mind had been clouded, and the words had caused the light to break in. "Your wife," she repeated again, placing her hand over her eyes and moving her head away. "Oh, what have I done?" she suddenly exclaimed. "Surely I have been mad. You have blinded me to my sense of duty of honour. Your wife? No, no, that can never be! Your wife? You, a true and noble and honourable man, and I—Oh, Heaven, forgive and pity me!"

She covered her eyes with her hand and burst into tears.

Then she remembered the visit of the stranger the night before, and the influence he seemed to have exerted over her, and he connected her emotion now with that visit. What was the mystery? Could he hope for a solution of it from her?

(To be continued.)

WHAT THE HEART IS.—The heart is like a plant in the tropics, which all the year round is bearing flowers and ripening seeds and letting them fly. It is shaking off memories and dropping associations. The joys of last year are ripe seeds that will come up in joy again next year. Thus the heart is planting seeds in every nook and corner; and as a wind

which serves to prostrate a plant is only a sower coming forth to sow its seeds, planting some of them in rocky crevices, some by river courses, some among mossy stones, some by warm hedges, and some in garden and open field, so it is with our experiences of life, that sway and bow us either with joy or sorrow. They plant everything round about us with heart seeds. Thus a house becomes sacred. Every room hath a memory, and a thousand of them; every door and window is clustered with associations.

EXPECTATIONS.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE woman whom Vernon thus beheld in the dense shadow of the Monk's Walk, in the shelter of the abbey ruins, was Meggy Dunn, and the child in her arms was of course the infant son of Joliette—the unacknowledged, threatened heir of Sir Mark Trebasil.

It had become the custom of the nurse to take her young charge for a walk in the fresh outer air very soon after dusk, adopting for this purpose the hour spent by Joliette at dinner.

Thus it had happened that Mrs. Dunn had usually retired into the secret rooms of the abbey before Gannard even made his appearance in the abbey grounds.

Vernon shrank closer against the huge trunk of the tree as the woman came nearer to him. No sound reached his hearing save her quiet footfalls, and the loud cawing of the rooks overhead.

"Odd!" muttered the villain. "She seems to be taking a promenade—a constitutional. She cannot have just arrived from a distance. Where are Gannard and his sister? I wish I could see them. They may not have arrived. By Heaven, the woman looks like a ghost. It would be easy to imagine her a visitant from the other world. Ah, what's that?"

A baby's cry had reached his hearing.

Mrs. Dunn was now within a few feet of him. She halted, uncovered the little face nestled on her bosom, and kissed it, and murmured over it sentences of that unintelligible jargon so dear to mothers and nurses, and which is supposed to be so well adapted to infant comprehension. And then, as the child replied with a happy cooing sound, the nurse pressed it closer to her, covered its face again, and resumed her walk.

"It is well that we did not think of attempting to bribe the nurse," thought Vernon. "She is too much attached to the child to fall into my plans. A fine, muscular young woman! Gannard will have his hands full if he attempts to tear the child from her. It's a risky business—very risky. It is fortunate that this spot is so retired."

The nurse passed slowly on towards the farther end of the ruins.

"Perhaps she has arrived too early and cannot effect an entrance," Vernon said to himself. "Perhaps—can it be possible that she has found a hiding-place in these ruins and comes forth only at night for fresh air? Why should she not have done so?" And he glanced up at the long and dusky line of ruins, with its broken casements and ivy-grown walls. "The ruins are said to be haunted. Why should not their owner take advantage of this opportunity to have her child near her?"

The idea seemed so feasible that he immediately gave it credence.

"I believe Miss Stair has a den for her child and its nurse somewhere within all that gloom and darkness," he mused. "We have looked upon the lady of the abbey as a maiden, and all the while she has lived her own hidden life as wife and mother! Ah, the woman is turning to retrace her steps in this direction. I wonder where Gannard is. He should be on hand."

He peered about him yet more anxiously, and listened yet more intently. And now he heard a faint rustling near at hand among the underbrush, and the sound of subdued and stealthy whispering.

His eyes gleamed in the darkness. He knew that his trusty confederates were at hand, ready for their work.

It was now nearly eight o'clock. In the deep and gloomy shadow, under the black arch of the tall forest trees, in the shelter of the abbey ruins, walked the unsuspecting nurse, with Joliette's child in her arms.

And in the deeper shadows that enclosed the Monk's Walk, like a great solid wall of blackness, lurked the three enemies of the child, waiting with hushed breath and eager hands the moment when the woman should draw near to them upon her return course.

Within the abbey, upon its farther side, in the magnificent dining-hall, Joliette presided at the table,

which, glittering with polished silver and crystal, and glowing with exquisite bits of colouring, exhibited in flowers, hothouse grapes, pink-cheeked peaches, and forced pines, made a charming picture in itself. The lights burned softly; the fire shone redly in the grate.

Mr. Weston had long since returned to London, but Adrian Rossitour was in his old place, and Mrs. Malverne made the third and final member of the party.

The events of the past few weeks had wrought a great change in each member of the small group.

Adrian Rossitour looked years older, was grave and quiet, with the shadow of a great trouble on his face. The supposed fate of poor Chariot Lyle weighed heavily upon him, although her name was seldom upon his lips.

Mrs. Malverne had concluded to defer her departure from Blair Abbey until after the expected decease of Sir Mark Trebasil, and until after the accomplishment of Vernon's schemes regarding Joliette's child. She knew that her presence at the abbey had become exceedingly distasteful to her hostess, but the fair widow was not troubled with scruples of delicacy, and thought only of her own advantage. She was dressed in a mauve-coloured silk and wore a set of pearl ornaments, and looked larger and heavier than ever before, while her countenance wore an expression of superciliousness and self-complacency that, under other circumstances, Joliette might have found highly amusing.

There was another reason for the widow's prolonged stay at the abbey. The little matter of her enlarged income and the settlement upon her of the Thames villa had not yet been satisfactorily settled. Mr. Weston, after due deliberation, had advised Joliette to accede to Mrs. Malverne's blackmailing demands, and had intended to make the necessary transfers of property to the widow without delay, but Sir Mark Trebasil's unexpected illness had placed the matter in abeyance. If the baronet should die there would be no need of buying Mrs. Malverne's silence. In the event of Sir Mark's death the marriage of Joliette and the existence of her son would be of course proclaimed to the world. But if the baronet should recover—which now seemed impossible—the widow's silence would be purchased.

Mrs. Malverne understood the thoughts and plans of the lawyer as well as if he had imparted them to her, but her complacency and general satisfaction were by no means disturbed. If Sir Mark should die she would marry Vernon and become mistress of Waldgrove Castle, in which case she would have no need of money or house from Joliette. Whichever way matters might turn she believed herself sure of especial good fortune.

Joliette, in vivid contrast to the full-blown widow, clung to her mourning garments and, indeed, seemed to dress in deeper mourning than ever. Her slender figure seemed to have grown thin to fragility; there were dark lines beneath the great jetty eyes; the pale olive skin had acquired a new transparency, deeper pallor. She looked like one whose days are full of anxiety and whose nights are sleepless. Yet in her generous desire to hide her own troubles from Adrian Rossitour, who had himself suffered so much, she had assumed an air of cheerfulness that would have deceived one less keen-eyed than he.

The dinner over, the party adjourned to the drawing-room.

Joliette, her thoughts drifting to her boy, out in the dark Monk's Walk with his nurse, sat down in a great amber arm-chair before the ruddy hearth, and buried her restless fingers with wool embroidery.

Rossitour took up a book, making comments upon it.

Mrs. Malverne seated herself at the grand piano, played a few bars from a new opera, and then, finding her companions dull, remembered that she had letters to write, and went away to her own room.

Joliette's work dropped from her fingers as the widow disappeared.

Rossitour laid down his book with a weary sort of smile.

"Hard work, this trying to keep up an interest in things we do not care for," he said. "A penny for your thoughts, Joliette."

"I was thinking of my boy—and his father," said Joliette, sighing.

"I knew it by the expression of your face. I was over at the castle to-day, but I was not allowed to see Sir Mark. They say he is really going to die, Joliette."

Joliette's face grew whiter, and a drearier look came into her sombre eyes, but she made no answer.

"He can't last much longer," continued Rossitour. "Mr. Penfold, the rector, you know, speaks of Vernon as Sir Mark's heir. Several of the tenants are already paying court to Vernon, and he, I under-

stand, is swelling himself up with importance. He assumes airs of patronage, and even carries himself as master of the household. He ordered the steward to report to him henceforth. 'What a fall, my countrymen,' he will suffer when he finds that Sir Mark has left a son and heir, and that, though Sir Mark may die, Sir Archibald will reign in his stead!"

"Is Sir Mark conscious? Does he know any one?"

"He lies silent in his bed, but he is conscious. He is allowed to see no one except his doctors, nurse, and valet, and the old housekeeper."

"If he were really dying," said Joliette, in a low voice, "I should go to him and tell him of the existence of his son. But I could not do that while the faintest possibility remains that he may recover. He hates me, you know; he believes me vile and wicked; if he were to get well he would tear my boy from me and leave me desolate."

Rossitour assented.

"We can only wait," he said. "And now, Joliette, as Mrs. Malverne has retired for the night, there is no need that you should remain here. Let us have a romp with Master Archie. He will cheer you if any one can."

Joliette glanced at the clock.

"Meggy must have brought him in long before this," she said. "I will let you in at the postern-door, Adrian. Perhaps a romp with little Archie will do us both good."

Rossitour strolled out of doors, apparently for his usual evening walk and cigar upon the terrace. Joliette went up to her own rooms.

She found Mrs. Bittle dozing before the fire in the large dressing-room. The serving-woman started up at the entrance of her young mistress, and murmured some apology for her drowsiness.

"Is Meggy come in yet?" asked Joliette.

"She must have come in long ago, my lady," answered Mrs. Bittle. "It's after half-past eight. Master Archie will be just ready for his romp. It does beat all how full of frolic he is."

Joliette opened the secret door that gave into the hidden rooms of the ruins. Mrs. Bittle followed her. The sitting-room was bright and warm and pleasant; but the nurse and child were not there. There were heaps of toys on the floor, looking as if the little petted heir had just been playing with them. Having secured the door, Joliette and Mrs. Bittle entered the bed-chamber, and passed into the bed-room.

A cluster of wax candles burned softly here upon the mantelpiece. The fire glowed behind the tall bright nursery fender. The door that gave upon the secret staircase was ajar. But nurse and child were still missing.

"Strange that Meggy should stay out so late," said Joliette, uneasily. "Too much of this night air is not good for baby, I think. I'll go down and let Mr. Rossitour in, and at the same time I'll call Meggy."

She hurried down the staircase and opened the little postern-door. Rossitour stood without.

"Meggy has not come in yet, Adrian," said Joliette, looking out beyond him and trying to pierce the gloom with her anxious glances. "Will you call her, please?"

Rossitour called softly: no one answered.

"She may be at the farther end of the ruins," he said. "I will go in that direction."

He moved away through the darkness. He was absent some minutes, and returned unsuccessful and thoroughly uneasy.

"She may have extended her walk into the park, Joliette," he said; "she is not in the Monk's Walk. Have you known her to go far from the ruins?"

"Never. Something must have happened, Adrian. She would not have left the Monk's Walk. I am sure. Perhaps she has been taken ill. I will find a lantern."

Mrs. Bittle had been standing on the stairs, listening, and she now hurried away in quest of a lantern. She was gone several minutes, returning at last with the required article, and Rossitour resumed his search.

"I must go with you," cried Joliette. "Keep guard here at the door, Mrs. Bittle. Call to us if Meggy comes back. Come, Adrian."

She flew past Rossitour, half-wild with her growing fears. Together they examined the Monk's Walk, and explored the neighbouring shadows.

They had investigated the walk the distance of two-thirds its length when Joliette espied a dark object lying in the very edge of the bushes a few rods in advance of them.

With a cry of terror she sprang forward.

The object, upon nearer approach, was seen to be the form of a woman stretched upon the ground, helpless and unconscious.

"It is Meggy!" cried Joliette. "The lantern! Quick, Adrian!"

Rossitur ran to Joliette's side, and the red glow of the lantern was turned full upon the unconscious woman's face.

It was the face of Meggy Dunn, but so beaten, bruised, and bleeding as almost to defy recognition. The nurse's garments were torn, her hat gone, her hair unloosened, and in her tightly clenched hand was a piece of cloth that might have been wrenched from a man's coat.

"What can have happened?" ejaculated Rossitur. "What?"

Joliette interrupted him with a shrill cry and sprang up with the spring of a panther.

"My boy!" she whispered, hoarsely—"my boy, Adrian! He's gone! Archie! Archie!"

Finding her voice and calling softly with all a mother's passionate tenderness, Joliette explored the vicinity; but no cooing voice answered her. The child had not crept away in baby-sport or terror. The piece of cloth in the nurse's hand, and the woman's frightful appearance, attested that the child had been taken from her by violence.

"Oh, Adrian, I see it all!" she cried, turning to him a face wild with despair. "Sir Mark Trebasil has done it all. He has bereaved me of my boy—"

"Sir Mark! Why, he is ill—"

"His illness is a pretence, or else he has worked by means of others. Don't you see? Adrian, he had discovered the secret of my stay at Arpignon. He knew of the existence of his son. He made me own the fact that I am a mother. And he has torn my boy from me. This is his boasted revenge! Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?"

"The first thing to be done," said Rossitur, "is to revive this poor creature, and hear from her what has happened. Take the lantern, Joliette. I will carry Mrs. Dunn into the abbey."

Joliette took the lantern and Rossitur tried to lift the nurse.

She was no light weight, however, and it was with difficulty that he succeeded in transporting her to the little postern door and the lobby within. Here he laid her upon the floor.

Mrs. Bittle, all horror and amazement, brought water and pungent salts, and burnt feathers, and other popular remedies, and presently Meggy Dunn gave signs of returning consciousness.

As she opened her eyes, and her gaze rested upon Joliette's white and anguished face, the nurse started up, crying out, shrilly:

"Did he get away? Where is the baby? Oh, my lady, the man sprang out upon me and tried to tear the child from my arms! See how I fought for little Master Archie! Is he gone? It's all Sir Mark's doing, my lady! He has stolen the boy to revenge himself upon you! We shall never see the baby again!"

CHAPTER LIV.

At a very early hour upon the morning succeeding the events narrated in the preceding chapter, Adrian Rossitur presented himself at Waldgrave Castle and requested a private interview with Sir Mark Trebasil, "on important business."

Of course, the request was met with a polite refusal, none the less decided for being polite. Mr. Rossitur's countenance did not exhibit a perfect credence in the statement of the condition of the baronet, and he demanded to see the doctor, who was still at the castle during the larger portion of the time.

A servant was despatched in search of the doctor, and Mr. Rossitur was ushered into a reception-room, where the Trebasil practitioner presently joined him.

"I wish to see Sir Mark upon most urgent business," said Rossitur, arising and bowing politely. "The servant tells me that his master is still very ill, and that he sees no visitors. I am persuaded that he would see me—"

"Impossible, my dear sir, impossible! Sir Mark can see no one. Not even his dearest friend could be admitted into his bed-chamber!"

"At least, you will deliver to him a note from me—"

"That, also, is an impossibility. He is not able to receive visits or read letters. If you have business with Sir Mark, Mr. Rossitur, I must tell you that it is extremely improbable if he can ever attend to business again. You would do better to see Mr. Vernon. He is Sir Mark's heir-presumptive, and is already taking upon himself many of his future duties."

Rossitur looked irresolute.

"Is Sir Mark really and truly incapable of seeing any one?" he asked; "or does he seclude himself because he desires to be thought ill?"

"He is really and truly ill, sir. How could any idea other than that have got afloat? He sees no one except his nurse, valet, housekeeper, and the doctors."

"I suppose, then, I must relinquish my design of seeing him," said Rossitur. "I am very seriously disappointed; but no doubt I shall effect my object without having recourse to him. Permit me to bid you good morning, sir."

He bowed himself out.

As he descended the stone steps of the porch he encountered Vernon, who had just been on a visit to the stables, and who was quite flushed over the merits of thoroughbreds and pointers, which he now regarded as his own.

The two gentlemen exchanged greetings.

"Have you seen Sir Mark?" inquired Vernon. "They won't permit me to see him—say he's dying, and all that."

"Do you suppose he is really so ill as is said, Mr. Vernon?" asked Rossitur.

"Do you doubt it, Rossitur?"

"I don't know what I think, Vernon. I came here to see Sir Mark on an urgent matter, but the doctor refuses to convey even a note to him. I would give a fortune for five minutes' interview with the baronet—"

"Such an interview is impossible," interrupted Vernon. "Ill, or otherwise, Sir Mark will see no one. Are all well at the abbey?"

"Miss Stair is ill," replied Rossitur. "She has the Langworth doctor in attendance. I have to go on to Langworth, so I will not farther detain you!"

Rossitur mounted his horse, which, held by a groom, was in waiting. He had scarcely settled himself in his saddle when a castle-groom, well mounted, came up the drive with the post-bag, which he delivered to Vernon, who now had charge of the key.

The villain unlocked the bag and extracted therefrom a dozen or more letters, most of them addressed to Sir Mark Trebasil, and containing kindly inquiries into his state of health. There was a single letter addressed to Vernon himself and this he detained, sending the bag with its remaining contents into the castle.

Rossitur's eyes dwelt idly upon the letter as he lingered a moment, loth to depart without having accomplished his errand.

The letter presented the appearance of a small packet, as if other letters were enclosed within it. It was addressed to Vernon in a delicate handwriting and bore the postmark of Lisbon, Portugal.

"Since Sir Mark has been ill," said Vernon, with a laugh, "all my old acquaintances who had forgotten my very existence seem suddenly to remember me and the exact degree of relationship in which I stand to the baronet. Now, here's a letter from Lisbon. I know no one in Lisbon, and never was in Portugal in my life—"

He paused, staring at the handwriting more keenly and with suspicion, and thrust the packet in his pocket. Rossitur fancied that Vernon turned pale and looked frightened for an instant, but the visitor had no time to linger farther and abruptly took his leave.

Vernon hurried to his own apartments.

He ascertained that Gannard was absent, and tore open the missive with feverish rapidity.

A glance showed him that the letter was from Charlott Lyle, and that the enclosed missives were addressed to Joliette and to Adrian Rossitur respectively.

He had barely made this discovery when Gannard made his appearance.

"What's up?" asked the valet, marking with surprise the agitated mien of his employer. "Park is dead at last?"

"When did you last hear from that half-brother of yours, Jack Nichols?" demanded Vernon, abruptly.

"A week ago, sir."

"What did he say then?"

"That the young lady was well and closely guarded, and that we need have no fears in regard to her, for it was impossible that she should ever escape."

Such was in fact the substance of the latest epistle of the astute Nichols.

He had returned home to find Miss Lyle gone, and to hear the story of her escape, and of the frightful tempest that had raged upon the night in which she had effected her flight. It seemed more than probable that the delicate girl in her frail boat had perished in that storm. Yet, to "make assurance doubly sure," Nichols had made a thorough search of the channel and adjacent coasts, which had resulted in his discovery of the wreck of the little craft in which the young lady had departed. He believed then, of course, that Miss Lyle was drowned. But he was too shrewd to impart this conviction to his relative Gannard.

He received an annual income from the valet for his guardianship of the girl, and he resolved to let affairs go on for the present as if she still lived and were under his roof. It would be time enough to

tell the story of her fate when the tale should be forced from him by the pressure of circumstances.

"Gannard," said Vernon, "your brother deceived you. The girl is free. Here is a letter from her dated Lisbon, Portugal. What it all means—how she came there—and why she writes to me—is a mystery. She has enclosed letters to Rossitur and Miss Stair. You could have knocked me over with a feather when—"

"Read the letter," said the valet, sharply. "What does she say?"

The letter was read aloud, in tones scarcely above a whisper.

"What's to be done now?" said Vernon. "The girl seems to bear a charmed life. She's probably in that captain's house near Lisbon waiting for responses to her letters—"

"See what she says to Rossitur and Miss Stair."

Vernon read the letters that had been enclosed in the one addressed to himself.

"There is no suspicion of me in them," he said, "and no suspicion that you and the mistaken 'Smith' are one and the same, Gannard. Was ever a girl of twenty more unsuspecting? She thinks that she has been the victim of a singular mistake—that's all. Her letter to Rossitur is modelled upon the basis prescribed in the complete letter-writer. It would not provoke a smile if it were read aloud in a breach-of-promise suit to-morrow. It is, in short, a calm, temperate, refined sort of love-letter, that could not bring a blush to the writer's cheek if it were published. Your young people now-a-days are not apt to write very extravagant love letters. You can see that her trust in me is unimpaired, or she would not write to me begging me to break the news of her safety to her lover and friend."

"I see. What are you going to do?"

"There's the rub! What can I do? I'd like to stay here and look after my interests in this quarter. I want to be in possession here when Sir Mark dies. But I ought to go to Lisbon—to her—"

"You must go!" said Gannard, decidedly. "You can state that you are going to London on business. I will remain here to look after our interests."

The two consulted together more at length, discussed plans of action, and resolved upon one that appeared feasible. Gannard packed his employer's dressing-bag and ordered a carriage, and an hour later Vernon was on his way to Langworth.

As he drove up the narrow and ill-paved High Street of the market town he looked about him curiously, half-expecting to behold Rossitur. He was not disappointed. At the door of the dingy little police-station, indicated by a coloured lamp, he beheld Adrian Rossitur in close conversation with the ablest inspector of the force.

Rossitur bowed his recognition, and came down the steps as Vernon's carriage, in obedience to his command, drew up at the kerb-stone.

"Anything wrong, Rossitur?" asked the villain, jauntily.

"Nothing, I hope, that cannot be remedied," replied Rossitur, gravely. "Are you going away?"

"Only up to London on business," was the answer. "I shall be back in a day or two. I left a note with my servant to be delivered to Mrs. Malverne, explaining my absence. She will answer all inquiries if any be made. Good-bye, my dear fellow. Au revoir!"

Vernon drove on, proceeding to the station.

Rossitur looked after the sinner, a sudden idea flashing upon him.

"Vernon is heir-presumptive to Sir Mark Trebasil if the baronet should die without an heir," he said to himself. "Where, then, could Sir Mark find a ready tool to work out his threatened revenge upon Joliette than in this man who would be benefited by Archie's disappearance? I think I begin to see light! Vernon is in Sir Mark's confidence. He is engaged to marry Helena Malverne, who has openly avowed herself Joliette's enemy. These three, Mrs. Malverne, Vernon, and Sir Mark Trebasil, have banded themselves together to destroy Joliette. I see it all! And Vernon is going now to make some disposition of the child! I have set the police at work to trace the child, allowing them to think it Meggy Dunn's offspring, but I would do well to engage in the search myself. It will be hard to leave Joliette in her great desolation, but harder still to remain here supine and witness it. I will go!"

He turned and re-entered the police station. He stated to the superintendent that he wished to engage personally in the search for the missing child, and procured a disguise in which he equipped himself. Then, in the seeming of a Cornish farmer, he emerged again into the street.

There remained fifteen minutes before the departure of the London express.

During this interval he visited a stationer's shop and wrote a letter to Joliette, which he despatched by special messenger to the abbey.

He had ridden to Langworth unattended, and his horse was stabled at the principal hotel. It was not necessary that he should send any message in regard to it and he refrained from doing so.

He was at the station in time and secured a compartment in the carriage adjoining that occupied by Vernon.

On arriving in London he followed Vernon to his hotel, and obtained a room near that of the villain.

Vernon remained quiet during the evening succeeding his arrival in town; but the next morning, at an early hour, he was down among the shipping offices, the pretended Cornish farmer in his wake.

To Rossiter's intense amazement, Vernon took passage in the steamer "Zephyr" bound to Oporto.

The vessels of this line sail twice a month, and one was to sail at an early hour of the following morning.

"Shall I back out here, or shall I go to Oporto?" asked Rossiter of himself. "He said he should visit London 'for a day or two.' There is something more in all this than meets the eye. If he were going to Portugal for any honest purpose he would not have hesitated to state his destination. His purpose, then, must be dishonest. He may have sent the child on by some confederate. I'll follow him!"

Without pausing to deliberate, Rossiter hastened to procure another disguise and to secure his passage also to Oporto in the "Zephyr." And the next morning when Vernon, muffled and cloaked, stood on the steamer's deck, and the vessel receded from her dock at East Lane Stairs, Adrian Rossiter, in the disguise of an Italian courier, stood not ten feet distant from him.

Thus, enemy and lover—the one a spy upon the other—hastened towards the land where Charlotte Lyle awaited them.

(To be continued.)

DEBBIE'S WAGES.

"CAN'T have it," said Farmer Colt, shaking his head, solemnly. "There's no use talking, Deborah, you can't have it. Crops are all poor this year; the rain has s'most spoiled the hay; that cow died the other night; and labour is not only lazy and saucy, but charges more than I ever heard tell of before. Silk indeed! Why, my mother never had a silk dress in her life. She has too much sense, and you ought to have tasted her butter."

It was a striped silk, black and blue, that had just arrived at the village shop, and the recipient of the lecture was blue-eyed Debbie Colt, her father's only daughter, who certainly earned what the farmer called "her salt" with her two plump little hands. Morning, noon and evening she was busy taking upon her shoulders all the work that her dead mother had done in her lifetime, and with no help to speak of in kitchen or dairy. It was a hard life, and when winter came and there was a little amusement to be had, a few parties and a lecture or two, is it any wonder that Debbie experienced the natural wish for a little adornment that is common to all woman-kind? Can any one blame her as the father did for wishing once in her life for a really nice dress?

"It's only seven shillings and sixpence a yard, pa," she began again, "and I can make it myself. I—"

But this time the old man roared:

" Didn't I tell you that you couldn't have it?"

And Deb closed her lips and went away tearfully to set the table for supper.

Perhaps the dishes did come down on the table with little bangs. Perhaps the spoons did jingle more than usual. Perhaps the knives were not softly and tenderly laid down. At all events pretty soon some one who had been standing in the shadow outside the door burst into a low laugh and cried out:

"Well, I never, Debbie Colt. Anybody can see you're cross by the way you set the table. What's happened?"

"Oh, come in, Mrs. Fish," said Debbie, too cross to smile. "Come in and sit down. There's nothing much the matter, only the old story. You know how close pa is and you know how shabby I am, just as well as I can tell you. I shall just have to shut myself up always, for go out in that horrible green merino, with half the colour faded out, I won't; no indeed. Sally Parker looks as if she was a princess every Sunday, and her father is only a carpenter. Pa is rich and he needs be so mean."

"Old folks get near as they get on," said Mrs. Fish, "and men folk worst of all, I do believe; but I don't know but what there's a way for you to get your dress, after all, if you ain't too stuck up to earn it, and if your pa would let you. There ain't so much to do now, and old Martha Grey would help you. She is always glad to go and work for her keep."

"Oh, pa wouldn't mind," said Debbie, pausing in the act of putting down a dish. "What is it, Mrs. Fish?"

"Well," said that lady, rummaging in her pocket, "well, I'll tell you. Oh, here it is! Old Mrs. Doughty up on the hill—first-class family, you know, and a regular stylish house—she's lost her sight, you know—that is, pretty near. She can see to go about, but 'aint safe to go alone; and she can't read; nor sew, nor nothin'. Well, to-day her son was speaking to me, and he said he'd like to get a young lady to wait on his mother. Not a servant, says he, but a companion—one that can read well, and would do everything a daughter could. It wouldn't be for long—only for a couple of months—for they're going abroad then; but meanwhile you'd earn your dress. Oh, here it is—his card I was looking for. He wrote down what he was willing to give and all."

Debbie took the card and regarded it thoughtfully.

"It's September now," she said, "and at at two pounds a month I should have four pounds by November. I have never had so much at a time in my life. I'll do it, Mrs. Fish—that is, if I should suit. I can read aloud nicely, I know; and perhaps I shall suit. Pa's consent I'm sure of."

And so, after an interview with old Mrs. Doughty, the matter was settled.

Debbie was a pleasant girl when she was not tormented by undeserved reproaches, and the life at the house on the hill was new and pleasant to her. The refinement of manners—the elegance of all arrangements—were new revelations to her, and she was quite adaptive by nature.

Unconsciously she soon spoke in lower tones, moved more elegantly, and lost those bad habits of speech which were the result of association with uneducated people; and she did her duty well and was kind and faithful.

The old lady needed her every hour of the day, but she did not weary; and, somehow, there was compensation for all fatigues, in the pleasant evenings, when Mr. Charles Doughty, coming home from the town, made himself as agreeable to the new inmate of the house as though she had been a guest.

"If I only had a brother like that," Debbie often thought; "if this were my home, how happy I should be!"

So the days glided by. Her first month's wages were paid, but Debbie had lost her desire for the striped silk. A heavy black silk like those worn by Mrs. Doughty had become her object now. So she hoarded her money carefully.

The dress should have a train and a little lace ruff, and it should fit her neatly, and not be the shapeless bag that Miss Bones, the village dressmaker, believed to be a polonaise.

Once, at least, she would let Charles Doughty see her in this—once, at least, she would prove that she could look like a lady.

She hated the green merino now worse than ever, for hide it beneath white aprons as she might, she could not hide its spottiness.

And yet Mr. Doughty was so polite, so courteous, so kind.

"What a happy woman his wife will be!" thought poor little Debbie.

Once indeed he had even taken her for a walk when she had a headache, and he had looked at her so sweetly. No one was so handsome, so grand.

And then Debbie found tears in her eyes; she could not guess why.

"Oh, to stay here for ever!" she sighed.

But, alas! the happiest days fly fastest. The two months were drawing to an end. There was talk about the coming journey, and one day Mrs. Doughty paid the last month's wages into poor Debbie's palm.

"I can't pay you for all you've done for me," she said. "But I know" (Debbie had been confidential), "that you want a black silk. I've made it a little more; and you go down to-day and buy it, and let me feel it when you come home. I'm a good judge of silk by touch, even now."

And Debbie felt wonderfully rich as she hurried off on her errand. But somehow she was not happy as she had hoped to be. She should have the dress—but her old life of thankless toil would begin again, and her friends were going to leave her. The sea would between her and the kind old lady and splendid Mr. Charles.

"I don't feel as if I cared to buy it," said Debbie to herself. "What do I care for the rest of the people in the place—for stupid Jack Brown and silly Bill Batters? There's not a beau in the place worth having. No one interesting or pleasant. They can't be agreeable or polite; all they can do is to grin and try to kiss you. Oh, I detest them all. And the only man worth anything in the world I shall never see again."

Poor Debbie! She had come to London the better to accomplish her object, but her mind was far away. With abstraction written on her face, and her reticule loosely held in her hand, the country girl was an object calculated to attract the attention of the first evil-disposed individual who met her. And very soon two young men in shabby clothes, with low, evil faces, stumbled up against her, reproved each other for "hitting against the lady," and while she, confused and alarmed, endeavoured to get out of their way, snatched her reticule and fled.

The next moment, rid of her dreams for the time being, Debbie realized the fact that she was alone and penniless in a great, strange city.

"What shall I do?" she asked herself, as the tears filled her eyes. "The dress is gone, of course; but how am I to get home again? Will they take me in the train without money?"

Stories of benighted travellers rashed into her memory. She had not a friend in London. It was such a wicked place. Robbed now, might she not be murdered next? People looked at her curiously. An impudent foreigner with a hooked nose leered at her. A dairymen approached and clutched her arm. He only meant to beg, but the girl's nerves were quite unstrung by this time, and she gave a little scream and turned to run. This time some one caught her hand.

"Oh, please, don't kill me," sobbed Debbie.

But the hand was clasped more tightly.

"What is the matter, Debbie? Don't you know me?" said a voice, and there was Mr. Charles Doughty.

"Oh, thank goodness!" sighed Debbie, and clung to him as though her life were in danger.

"Take my arm," he said. "London is enough to distract one unused to it. And what is it? Are you lost? Have you been frightened?"

"Not exactly," said Debbie, "but I've been robbed, and I began to think I should not get back home. Oh, how good you were to find me! But I declare I wonder you are not ashamed of me, in this shabby dress, as if my father was a beggar, not the rich man he is—and so excited, and all. I think perhaps you'd better not let me take your arm. I shall disgrace you, Mr. Doughty; I shall indeed. I declare it's blue, in some places, and yellow in others."

"I'm not looking at your dress, Debbie," said Mr. Charles. "I don't think any one could if it were shabbier than it is."

"It's well for me, for I shan't have another soon," said Debbie, with a sigh for the lost purse. "Is this the way to the station, Mr. Doughty?"

"No," said the gentleman. "We are going to lunch first. You must be starved. And so the money is gone, poor child!" and he patted the hand upon his arm, and Debbie's colour arose.

Her soft little face, with the flush upon it—her blue eyes, shining through long lashes—the golden hair, kinking itself into little waves upon the temples, as it would, being naturally curly, not crimped—made a pretty picture. Charles beat his head lower and looked at her.

"Little one," he said, tenderly, "have you been happy with us?"

"Happier than I ever have been before," said she, from her heart.

"And you liked my mother?"

"I love her," said Debbie, looking up.

"Do you like me?" whispered Charles Doughty. Debbie looked down; and for the first time she knew that she might have given him the same answer.

He knew it too.

"Dobie, darling," he whispered, "if you like me enough to be my wife, we can all go to Italy together. We do not intend to be away from England long. I intended to ask you before I went, at all events, but I could not be sure some village beauty was not before me. There is no one—is there, Debbie?"

"There is no one like you in all the world," said Debbie.

And then they went and had lunch together, with which prosaic termination we leave the rest to the reader's imagination.

M. K. D.

INDIAN COAL FIELDS.—The coal-fields of India may be divided into four groups:—Those of Bengal, including the coals of the Rajmahal Hills and those of the valley of the Damodar. 2. Those of Rewab, Sirguda, Bilaspur, Chutia, Naspur, and the tributary meadows of Orissa. 3. Those of the Nerbudda valley and the hills to the south of it. 4. Those of Chanda and the Godavari. The principal field is that of Raniganj, beginning about 120 miles northwest of Calcutta and extending northward about 18 miles. This field supplies about half a million tons a year, ten times the yield of all the other fields put together. The seams which are mined vary in thickness from

4½ feet to 35 feet and are individually variable. Eighteen distinct coal-bearing areas are enumerated in several groups. In all the basins the coals are mostly concentrated in one bed of great thickness, consisting of alternations of coal and shale, and the beds thin out rapidly to the west. In the Raniganj field, where the formation attains its maximum thickness, the upper group is 5,000 feet thick, the lower 2,000 feet, each containing several seams of coal. To the west the upper group is replaced by rocks containing no coal, while the lower diminishes greatly in thickness.

SCIENCE.

EIGHT pounds of oxygen gas and one pound of hydrogen are combined in nine pounds of water.

DR. A. WYNTER BLYTH, medical officer of health to the county of Devon, has made a series of experiments which show that water containing organic substances is purified by running through iron pipes.

IMPROVED STUCCO.—M. Landrin recommends the mixing of the crude plaster in water containing 8 to 10 per cent. of sulphuric acid. After allowing the compound to rest for fifteen minutes he calcines the plaster. This gives a stucco of excellent quality in which all organic matters are burnt out, leaving the material of exceptional whiteness.

LITHOGRAPHIC STONES.—It is said in France that the quarries of lithographic stones in Bavaria are exhausted as regards the best kind, and that the only fine stones are now obtained by the Paris lithographers from Bruniquel, Tarn, and Garonne, in France. These stones are said to be well appreciated in the United States. There are quarries of the same stone at Vigan, France, but these are of an inferior description.

ACID IN THE GASTRIC JUICE.—R. Maly finds that the pure gastric juice in dogs contains no lactic acid. The decomposition of chlorides by lactic acid cannot, therefore, be the source of the hydrochloric acid in the stomach. Lactic acid seems to play no part in the chemistry of the normal formation of acids. The source of the free hydrochloric acid in the stomach is a process of dissolution of the chlorides without the action of an acid.

THE DIAMOND DRILL.—The diamond drill is now extensively used in preliminary mining to ascertain the exact location and thickness of iron or coal at given points. It is not uncommon to bore into the sides of hills or mountains for hundreds of feet with a 2½ inch diamond drill of tubular form. By this means solid cores or specimens of the borings can be had. Conglomerate rock cores 12 feet in length, in one piece, have thus been obtained.

IMMENSE PHOTOGRAPHS.—Photographs have been made of the new Opera House, Paris; 4 feet 3 inches in length, and 3 feet 4 inches in height. They were obtained in one single piece, by well-known processes, and with the aid of a large and specially constructed camera. All the lines of the pictures are of remarkable excellence, the mouldings, the busts, the medallions, and even the minutest details being reproduced with rare perfection. The attempt is being made to secure pictures even larger than this.

A NEW POWDER FOR HEAVY GUNS.—The German Government has just adopted a new kind of prismatic powder for its heavy guns, which is far superior to that used in England and Russia. The powder hitherto used by the Germans was similar to the Russian, and was proved to be more effective than the English in some trials made with an eight-inch Woolwich gun and a Prussian 72-pounder on the artillery shooting-ground at Tegel. The new powder consists of hexagonal prisms like the old, but the prisms are pierced with one hole only instead of seven, and the specific gravity of the powder is raised from 1.65 to 1.68.

APPLYING THE STOMACH PUMP.—Dr. McEwen recommends that in the use of the stomach pump the head should be bent forward on the introduction of the tube, instead of backward, as is generally taught in books. When the head is thrown backward, he says, the spine becomes convex anteriorly, and as the tube is passed along it has a tendency to impinge upon the larynx; but when the head is bent forward then the mouth, pharynx, and oesophagus form a curve along which the tube glides gently into the oesophagus, and at the same time is directed away from the larynx.

PHOSPHORUS IN EYE DISEASE.—Dr. Gombart gives an account of a novel and interesting case—that of a young woman, of some 24 years, of nervous, lymphatic temperament, suffering from capsulocuticular cataract so as to be hardly able to discern light from darkness, and afflicted with frequent headaches. Two or three drops of phosphorized oil were dropped into the eye daily, and frictions of the same used over the forehead. After four months of this, which was used perseveringly, the patient's eye improved

to such a degree that colours could be distinguished, and the opacity of the lens was so far diminished that it could not be discerned at a distance of some two or three paces.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIGHTNING.—It may be as well to warn not only evil-doers but also respectable persons, male and female generally, to be careful what they are doing in a thunderstorm, or they may find themselves indefinitely photographed by lightning on surrounding objects. A curious instance of this is to be found in a photograph gallery in Colorado Springs, United States, belonging to Mr. Guernsey, where may be seen the photograph of the figure of a bear on rock. The history of this "great natural curiosity" is as follows:—In the county of Bent, on the Purgatoire River, eighteen miles from Las Animas, Colorado, on the smooth face of a sandstone cliff, overhanging by a wall of rock, a hundred or more feet high, was found this life-size photograph of a grizzly bear. The picture is not an accidental resemblance to the animal, but a portrait more perfect and life-like than any human art can supply. The short tail standing straight out, the ears visible, the mouth open, with eyes and teeth plainly to be seen, the attitude not constrained but perfectly natural, all demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt that the picture is a photograph stroke of lightning during the progress of a storm.

THE TRANSIT OF VENUS.

CABLE despatches from three of the American expeditions for the observation of the transit of Venus, respectively stationed in Japan, Siberia, and Tasmania, and from the British parties in India, China, and Egypt, announce the results thus far obtained. Professor M. Hall, telegraphing from Vladivostock, reports that as the planet advanced and touched the sun's limb the moment was signalled with accuracy; but owing to the drifting of haze and clouds between it was impossible to obtain good photographs of the contacts. After Venus had crept half way across the sun's disk, however, thirteen good negatives were secured, so that it will be possible to map the planet's track on the photographic image of the sun after the observers return home. Professor Davidson, at Nagasaki, was also troubled with cloudy weather. The first contact could not be recorded, but the time of the second one was obtained excellently. A large number of accurate measurements were secured, however, and sixty clear photographs. The astronomers of this party were remarkably fortunate, as almost immediately after the occurrence of the phenomenon the sky became thickly clouded.

Messages from the British parties to the Astronomer Royal state that at Thebes, Egypt, numerous fine photographs were taken; and at Cairo and Suez the closing stages of the transit were viewed under favourable auspices. The reports from Shanghai, China, are discouraging, and announce complete failure of all attempts, owing to the cloudy weather. The Indian observations seem to have been the most successful, upwards of one hundred negatives of the planet's position on the sun's disk being secured. The details of the micrometric measurements and of the instants of contact, it is also stated, were obtained with precision.

Professor Harkness, from Hobart Town, Tasmania, announces bad weather but good results, in the shape of one hundred and thirteen photographs. Altogether the reports are encouraging, and point to generally fair success. The despatches of Professor Harkness and Hall are the most important, owing to their stations being far north and far south of the Equator, and hence giving the most trustworthy data.

NEW DISCOVERIES IN THE MAMMOTH CAVE.—Professor F. W. Putman has recently explored the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, and has visited several caverns never before entered. His investigations have resulted in finding coloured fish without eyes, thus exploding the theory hitherto held that all eyeless fish are colourless. White fish with eyes, and crayfish both with and without those organs, were obtained, presenting many new features of great interest to naturalists. Skeletons of human beings, monkeys, and a large variety of valuable archaeological relics were found in the new chambers.

DIRTY MINES.—Many of the leading mining companies on the Comstock lode are now down to the depth of 2,000 feet, and a few still deeper. When mining first began on the great lode such a depth was not thought of, or, if thought of, no one expected to see mining operations carried to such a depth as 2,000 feet in less than fifty years. Now we not only do not feel startled at hearing the great depth of 4,000 feet spoken of but when we see preparation in actual progress for sinking that far we think but little of it. The Savage Company have broken ground for the foundations of new machinery, which is to be sufficiently powerful to sink their main incline to a

depth of 4,000 feet. This incline is already some distance below the 2,100 foot level, and is still being vigorously pushed downward. The new hoisting machine will be supplied with two 24 inch horizontal cylinders, of 4 feet stroke, and will be of over 400 horse power. The foundations of this engine are being laid about 80 feet to the westward of the present hoisting works. A building of 50 by 60 feet in size will be erected over the new hoisting engine and the machinery connected therewith. The carpenters are already at work framing the timbers for this building. The steel wire rope to be used is to be 4,000 feet in length, and will weigh about 24,000 pounds. It will be a round rope, and the upper end will be two inches in diameter, but 2,500 feet of its length will be tapered, and the lower end will be 1½ inches in diameter. The reel on which this cable will wind and unwind will be conical, and the cable will wind about it spirally. The Ophir Company contemplate the erection of similar machinery, and propose pushing their works to a like depth.

HYDROGEN.

IT may not be generally known that hydrogen gas, whether prepared by electrolysis, or by the decomposition of water with the aid of zinc and sulphuric acid contains an appreciable amount of oxygen. In fact, it would appear that it is almost impossible to rid it entirely from this admixture, such is the eagerness with which hydrogen seizes upon oxygen whether atmospheric or contained in solution in water. No definite compound is formed, but simply a mechanical mixture, in which the properties of both constituents remain unmasked.

Professor Grove was the first to notice this peculiar property of hydrogen while experimenting on the contraction sustained by different gases after ignition and subsequent cooling. He found that in some cases the contraction, in the case of hydrogen, amounted to 1-10th of the original volume. He found, on examination, that this was due to the oxygen held in suspension by the hydrogen, and which the latter obtained by passing through water. A lump of phosphorus placed in a vessel containing ordinary hydrogen phosphoresces for some considerable time, thick fumes being simultaneously given off. If this hydrogen, thus deprived of the oxygen, be made to pass, over so rapidly, into a receiver filled with water, it will have absorbed a sufficient amount of oxygen to cause a second piece of phosphorus to exhibit phosphorescence, and to give off its characteristic fumes, the hydrogen having in its brief passage through the water carried off all the dissolved oxygen.

PASTES, OR ARTIFICIAL GEMS.

From their rarity and value the gems and precious stones very early became the objects of imitation, and this often with considerable success. As chemistry advanced the imitations became more perfect, and now fictitious gems are frequently produced which require all the skill of an expert to detect. These artificial products are made of very pure, fusible, transparent, and dense glass, termed strass or paste, with the addition of metallic oxides to impart the necessary tints. The strass consists of silicon, alumina, oxide of lead, and potash, with traces of borax and arsenious acid to increase its clearness and brilliancy.

The success of an artificial stone depends chiefly upon the exact imitation of the tint of the real stone, but also in small degree upon the cutting, polishing, setting and foiling. Being essentially a glass, the artificial products differ from the natural in hardness, specific gravity, and power of conducting heat, and may be detected by their inferiority in these important properties. The hardest glass rarely exceeds 5, while the gems range from 7 to 10; glass seldom exceeds 2½ in specific gravity, the gems range from 2 ½ to 4 ½; glass has not the same cold feel when touched by the tongue, its conductivity being inferior to that of the precious stones.

In the preparation of pastes the ingredients are separately reduced to a fine powder, then mixed and sifted, next carefully fused, and ultimately allowed to cool very slowly. The more tranquil and continuous the fusion, and the more gradual the cooling, the greater is the density and beauty of the product.

BLOOD COLOURING MATTER FREE FROM IRON.—MM. Paquin and Jolly announce that they have obtained the hematoic pigment in a state of perfect purity and free from iron. Hematoine, as it is termed, burns without ash, similar to resinous substances. It is insoluble in pure water, and dissolves in small proportion in ammoniacal water, to which it gives a light yellow tinge. It is altered by potash and caustic soda solutions, to which it gives a brown colour, and is lightly soluble in alcohol. The solvents of hematoine are ether, chloroform, benzine, and bisulphide of carbon. With these bodies the weak solution is amber-coloured; when concentrated red.



[RISEN FROM THE DEAD.]

GAUDALJO'S WARD.

"WILL you not tell me who I am?"

"You are a minor—a child. I will not tell you."

The question, full of eagerness and anxiety, fell from a woman's lips; the answer, cold, stern and harsh, from a man's.

"Why will you not tell me?"

"For several reasons, which I do not see fit to explain. Perhaps I will some day, when you come to me and say I may tell you."

"May tell me?"

"Yes, may; but I shall exercise the judgment then that I exercise now. You had best go back to the organ, Lura, for you have not played much of late."

"How can I play when a mystery concerning my personality hangs over me like a cloud of sombre fate?"

The man bit his lips and scowled at the beautiful girl, who was leaving him reluctantly.

"I was foolish to leave my library unlocked," he said. "But I did not know that you had such curiosity. You have inherited it from your mother."

"My mother!" and the girl started forward, with clasped hands. "My mother! Oh, will you not tell me about her?"

"No; you might curse her were I to tell you all I know," he cried. "Your father——"

"Does he live?"

The interrogative interruption caused a bitterly triumphant laugh to ripple over his lips.

"Does he live?" he echoed. "I will answer you. He is dead. A thousand fathoms of pitiless sea cover his remains. He died as he had lived—one of the basest, the vilest——"

"'Tis a base falsehood, Domez Gaudaljo!"

The man sprang from his chair and started towards the impassioned girl, whose white lips still quivered with the bitter denunciation.

She faced him without a tremor and looked into

the flashing depths of his eyes without a sign of retreat.

"Beware," he hissed.

"I do not fear you. The blood of no base man flows through my veins. My father was not a villain. To the insulting declaration which has just fallen from your lips I again give the accusation of falsehood. Refute the charge if you can."

"I can; but I shall not assume the trouble of doing so," he replied, with a sneer, and then, after a moment's silence, continued, "Girl, did you ever hear of a ship called the 'Volican'?"

"I never heard of such a vessel."

"She is on the bottom of the sea. For seventeen years the nautilus has spread his little sails over the 'Volican' and her crew."

Then, with the sneer, now tintured with sinister revenge, lingering about his thin lips, he turned abruptly on his heel and walked away, leaving the girl on the palmetto-shaded porch alone.

She heard him ascending a stair a moment later, and then the opening and shutting of a distant door fell faintly upon her ears.

"He has gone to hide the mysterious papers," she murmured; "the story of my parents' lives and mine he is going to put away from me for ever. Oh, if I could know who I am! He is not my relative. I have discovered this at last. For years I believed that he was very near to me in relationship, but the papers that fell into my hands yesterday dissipate that belief. My skin is so fair, his so dark. He is a Creole. I know now that not a drop of Gaudaljo's blood flows through my veins. Could I resist? No. I sought him; his library was unlocked, his secretary open. What meant the dreadful sentences I saw traced by his hand? 'The vessel sank in six hundred fathoms of sea. All on board perished. Heaven befriended me, but it would not save him. The child Lura is now mine; she is worth her weight in gold to me, I can do as I please now, for he will never cross my path again.' Though I

saw these terrible words but for a single moment I see them still. They have rent the veil that so long has covered the face of the past, and I see the fringe of the mystery. I am not Lura Gaudaljo, as he calls me. I am the child of some sailor or passengers who sleeps in the wreck of the 'Volican.' I know this; but what is my name? Whose blood courses through my heart? Oh, my mother, if thou livest, come to thy child! I will love thee; I will kiss thee; I will not, as he says, curse thy name, thy memory. Mother, he must have hated thee. I know now how he can hate!"

For a long time after the last words had fallen from her lips Lura Gaudaljo, as she was called, stood on the porch with her eyes raised to Heaven, and her pale but beautiful hands clasped pleadingly. Suddenly she turned away, and the spot was deserted.

But it did not remain long untenanted after the girl's departure.

Domez Gaudaljo returned with a cigarette and threw himself into the easy skeleton chair. His manner told that he was ill at ease, and he turned the cigarette nervously between his lips without the aid of his hands, and watched the clouds that fluttered like golden-plumed birds before the setting sun.

"Seventeen years ago this very day the 'Volican' went down," he muttered, and the words seemed to please him. "I was living on the island then, and with the child—the girl—who is worth to me her weight in the purest gold that ever came from the bowels of terra firma, I came to these broad acres. His ghost could not find me here. Ha, ha! I have covered my tracks well. Not a single inhabitant of Cuba can put his hand on his heart, and say 'I know where Pedro Espanol is.'"

And then the old and triumphant sneer rippled over his lips again.

"Lura," he resumed, after a long pause, during which he had supplied himself with a fresh cigarette, "Lura must marry him. When I say that she must I mean that she shall. If that fellow, Roper Nesbit, comes here again, I will order him off. He has been insolent of late, and insolence from one of his ilk I will not brook. The other day, when I met him, and told him that his friends at home might like to see him, he asked me if a man could lie on the bottom of the sea for seventeen years and not be dead. A strange question and enough to frighten me! I wonder if he knows anything about Lura? If I thought he did—if I dreamed that he knew anything about the wreck of the 'Volican,' I'd——"

Domez Gaudaljo looked about him before he dared to finish that threatening sentence.

Nobody was in sight, and he finished it.

"I'd kill him."

He clenched his hands as he uttered the monosyllabic trio, and the cigarette, bitten in twain by the hateful closing of the teeth, fell into his lap.

"Lura must marry the man who is welcome here—Poynts Creyville. She shall marry no other. Ha! he is coming up the walk now. I will tell him about this Roper Nesbit."

A tall man was walking towards the mansion, and Gaudaljo regarded him from the chair.

The sun was setting, and the visitor was alternately in light and shade.

He came forward, with his hands buried in the pockets of his short coat, and his eyes seemingly riveted on the planter. He stooped, to avoid disturbing the tropical roses that overhung the portal of the porch, for he was a very tall man, and continued to advance.

Suddenly a paleness overspread Gaudaljo's face and the cigarette almost dropped from his lips.

The new-comer was not Poynts Creyville, as Domez Gaudaljo could plainly see, for he had halted within six feet of the chair, and was staring him in the face.

He seemed a statue, so motionless, lifeless, he stood in the centre of the porch, and Gaudaljo seemed tied to the chair he occupied.

For a moment this stare and counter-stare lasted, when, with a terrible effort, Domez Gaudaljo cried, putting forth his hand:

"Flesh or spirit, who are you?"

His words seemed to emanate from the innermost caves of a frightened soul.

And the statue—ghost it might have been—answered:

"I am the captain of the 'Volican'!"

Domez Gaudaljo started up.

"The captain of the 'Volican'!" he cried, and then he laughed. "Ha, ha, ha! You the captain of the 'Volican'? Sir, there are asylums for such as you. The skull of the commander of that vessel has graced a mermaid's temple for seventeen years. There was but one Raphael Reynolds, and if you claim to be he, you are an impostor. I advise you to be off as soon as possible."

Never moving nor taking his eyes off Gaudaljo, the visitor listened to his words.

A smile toyed with the lips barely visible under the long moustache, flecked with gray, and his dark eyes seemed to say "I know better than all this."

Gaudaljo looked like a man who had won a great triumph when he finished speaking, and with an air of success he fell back into the skeleton seat.

"Listen to me as patiently as I have to you, Pedro Espanez," said the man, in a deep, sonorous voice.

"I am listening," said the other, starting at the name just pronounced. "But you will oblige me if you lower your voice. Walls have ears, you know."

When the stranger spoke again Gaudaljo bit his lip, for the voice was not lowered a single key.

"Almost eighteen years ago," said the man, "the 'Volcian' sailed from Havana. Her commander was Raphael Reynolds, a young man of one-and-twenty. He knew you. He had a wife, who was taken ill at your house, and there she died, five days before the sailing of the 'Volcian.' His child—a daughter—Raphael Reynolds confided to you, and he offered you a goodly sum if you would keep her till he returned. You knew that Raphael Reynolds was worth by inheritance nearly half a million, and that his daughter was his sole heir. What do you think of my story thus far told, Pedro Espanez?"

Gaudaljo did not speak; his attempt to laugh derisively was a failure.

"The 'Volcian' would encounter the equinoctial storms," resumed the stranger. "The date of her sailing and her destination told you this. You gave her captain several men, for he was short. The storms you hoped for came; your villains did their work well. They sank the 'Volcian' in mid-ocean; but ere the gallant ship went down Raphael Reynolds forced a confession from Diego's lips. For nine days four men and a boy fought the horrors of the sea in an open boat. When a ship picked them up three were maniacs. Pedro Espanez, what do you think of your work? When the captain of the 'Volcian' recovered his reason—for he was one of the hapless three—he went to Cuba; but you had fled with his child. For sixteen years he has hunted for you relentlessly, unceasingly. At last he has found you. Pedro Espanez, or Gomez Gaudaljo as you now call yourself, I want my child!"

"The sudden demand brought Gaudaljo to his feet.

"Your child? I have not got her!"

"Do not tell that falsehood to the man to whom your villainy is an open letter!" said Raphael Reynolds, as we can now call the visitor. "Do not tell that to me, I say. I came hither for my child, and I am not going away without her. She is beneath your roof this moment. Summon her to me. Lura! Lura, my child!"

There was a responsive cry just beyond the door at the captain's right, and Gaudaljo started forward.

But before he could seize the knob the portal flew open, and Lura confronted the excited twain. Her eyes instantly sought the man standing in the gloaming, and suddenly she sprang towards him.

"Father—at last!"

"Lura, my child!"

The next moment, through the grizzled moustache, kisses rained upon her forehead, and the arms of her father were about her.

Gaudaljo stood bewildered near the door, and his eyes flashing like a tiger's, were riveted upon the scene which should have filled them with tears. He clenched his dark brown hands till the nails cut the skin, and the veins in his forehead swelled almost to bursting.

He saw all, yet he did not appear to see anything.

He was roused by a step at the end of the porch. That step broke the spell.

The captain of the "Volcian" raised his head, and turned to the new-comer with his half-fainting daughter leaning heavily on his arm.

Gaudaljo smiled when he recognized his visitor.

"Father, it is Poyntz Creyville," whispered Lura, restored to full consciousness by a glance at the man. "Beware! Gomez Gaudaljo has given me to him."

The captain's eyes flashed, and he stepped toward Poyntz Creyville, who halted and leaned forward to stare into his face.

"Roper Nesbitt, dare you—"

He paused abruptly, for he saw he was not addressing his rival.

"Roper Nesbitt would dare were he here," said Raphael Reynolds. "Poyntz Creyville, I have a right to this girl. I am her father."

The new-comer started, and stared at Gaudaljo.

"You have told me that her father was dead," he said. "What do you say now, Señor Gomez?"

"I say that he is an impostor."

Scarcely had the words passed his lips when the captain of the "Volcian" sprang at him.

Gomez Gaudaljo retreated and drew a pistol; but Lura threw herself between the men.

"Enough blood has been lost for me already," she cried. "Do not shed another drop. Father! Gomez!"

A report, deafeningly loud, broke the sentence, and she saw her father staggering from the muzzle of Gaudaljo's weapon.

He fell against some cacti that broke his descent, and a moment later, still clutching his weapon, he was rising again.

Poyntz Creyville, seeing this, darted upon him.

But at that moment a dark figure leaped upon the porch and alighted near the cacti.

Poyntz Creyville felt a hand on his throat, and found himself hurled with tremendous force against Gaudaljo. The victor followed up his advantage. He disarmed the twain, and said, sternly:

"Do not attempt to rise. I am not to be trifled with. I suppose you know me?"

"I know you, Roper Nesbitt. My day will dawn ere long!" hissed Poyntz Creyville.

Captain Reynolds was standing by the cacti, wiping his temple, and Lura's head lay on his bosom.

"I may take my child now," he said, in triumph, addressing Gaudaljo. "Half a million has slipped through your fingers. The captain of the 'Volcian' never saw a mermaid's palace. I can take the girl?"

"Take her—and the maledictions of Pedro Espanez; you are welcome to both!"

"I shall take both with pleasure," grated from the enraged plotter's teeth.

That night three persons left—Lura Reynolds, her long-lost father and lover.

Several weeks later Lura Reynolds saw a vessel bound for England.

A handsome man stood on the pier and watched her sail away. As her flag suddenly vanished below the waste of water he turned on his heel.

"They have outwitted me!" he hissed. "I'll let the girl and her fortune go. I wouldn't harm a hair of her head; but if I could have encountered her lover and the captain of the 'Volcian'!" and he ground his teeth revengefully.

That man was Poyntz Creyville.

To his beautiful home Roper Nesbitt bore Lura, his bride, and the captain still relates to his grandchildren the story of the wreck of the "Volcian."

Espanez, or Gaudaljo as he has been known to the reader, returned to Cuba, where the assassin's steel innocently avenged the loss of a gallant ship.

C. C. H.

PAPAL INFALLIBILITY 300 YEARS AGO.—The following account of an audience granted by Louis XIV. to a Nuncio of Pope Alexander VII., the bearer of brief dated April 6th, 1665, calling upon the King to take action against certain doctors of the Sorbonne, who had censured the doctrine of Infallibility, is translated from the Choisy Manuscripts in the National Library of Paris:—Account of the King's Answer.—13th May, 1665.—The Nuncio had some days past an audience of the King and complained of certain doctors of theology of Paris who had spoken insultingly against the infallibility of the Pope. The King replied he would follow the example of the Kings his predecessors, who had never restrained the liberty of the Faculty of Theology from saying and writing their sentiments on matters of their profession. After this the Nuncio presented to the King the Pope's brief, saying that it was quite time that the Italian divines taught the infallibility of the Pope and its superiority over the temporal power. The King answered that if there were any one of his subjects who should teach infallibility, he would chastise him in such a manner that it would never occur to others to teach it after, and that neither the Nuncio nor the Pope should prevent him doing so. The King, while making this reply, had his arm raised and his fist clenched. The Nuncio left the audience terribly disconcerted. The King went immediately to the Queen-Mother to tell her what had passed during the audience with the Nuncio, and among other things that he knew well who it was that did all this, and that if these people warmed him up more they would see what would come of it.

THE OYSTER FAMINE.—An article published some time ago tells a tale of the sad scarcity, and consequent high price, of one of the most delicious of our native productions. Not only is the oyster a delicacy (with those who can appreciate it), but it is the most wholesome and nutritious of all our shellfish; and in these days, when overpopulation makes every kind of food-supply a matter of importance, it must surely be worth while to pay attention to one of the most easily managed as well as the most lucrative of esculents. The excessive scarcity of oysters

at present has been accounted for in various ways. My own impression is that over-fishing, in consequence of the immense demand, is the real cause. Railroads carry the produce of the natural oyster-beds into every corner of the kingdom, where any one with the requisite means can now obtain them; and for one who had the power of purchasing them fifty years ago there must be many thousands now. The demand exists, and to such an extent that almost any price is given for oysters, which in my youth might be bought at a certain sea-coast town at 2s. per long hundred. At the same town they are now, for the same quality of oysters 5s. or 6s. for exactly 100 oysters, carefully counted. In France they are so aware of the value of oysters that great efforts are being made to cultivate them artificially. Judging from the accounts received from St. Brienc and Arcachon, there seem to be no insurmountable difficulties in the artificial production of oysters, supposing the proper capital and industry were employed, and would certainly be satisfactorily remunerative.—L.

WINTERS.

EVERY generation is dotted over with remarkable seasons. Every man's life has its constellation of frosts and snows. The pack-horse and the waggon, the stage-coach and the mail, have had to succumb to the rage of winters; and the locomotive engine has proved no match for its power. The sixth decade of the century, in common with the second, has left its indelible impress in memory. As in January, 1814, the mail-coach from Edinburgh had to be left behind, the bags being forwarded to Alnwick on horseback, and eight horses were required to draw the "Wellington" coach from York to Newcastle, so, in February, 1853, railway trains were on some lines embedded in snow-drifts, and on others struggled on their way by the force of five powerful engines; while turnpike roads were for days impassable, and life fell a victim to the fury of the storm. In the ensuing year (1854), the month of January was distinguished by one of the most pinching frosts of the century; and this was succeeded in 1855, when there was skating on the Tyne above Scotswood Bridge, and on Shrove Tuesday a football match on the Aln at Alnwick.

Three consecutive seasons of excessive severity, remarkable for frost and snow, mark the decade; and in its closing week it surpassed its profoundest cold. It went, indeed, beyond any previous frost of the century. This it did at Christmas, 1860; when, as Haydn commemorates in his "Dictionary of Dates," the thermometer fell to 15, 18, 20 degrees below zero. It was the severest frost since that of Christmas week in 1796, of which it reminded some of the seniors then living; even as, in 1796, aged men and women revived the memory of "the hard winter" of the reign of George the Second (1739-40), which was protracted over a period of nine frigid weeks. The cold of Christmas, 1860, destroying countless shrubs of the garden at the root, was thought to have outdone in severity the frosts of 1796 and 1799. Winter was then with us in its severest fashion, and left behind it the remembrance of a depth of cold which may hardly be overpassed.

Nor, if less severe, have sharp winters failed to visit us in subsequent years. These will readily recur to the recollection of all. There was the winter of 1869-70, when the thermometer touched 20 degrees at Christmas, and the earth was white with snow on Valentine's Day. And what shall we say of the winter of 1874-75, whose first flakes fell before November was half run out? The Old Year and the New have had their meeting in frost and snow. Their icy mark is in our annals, and will remain as proof that the "old fashion" of our winters is not worn out.

LAST year closed with a fearful host of disasters by sea and land. We mourn, and hope—hope experience may result in improvement—in the first place that some satisfactory plan of launching life-boats and keeping them well provisioned may be found, in the second that railway carriages may always have six wheels, giving a chance if one wheel should break down. Brunel long since insisted upon this as necessary, and yet to-day his sound theory is not acted upon.

NEW FACTORY ACT.—The Act passed in the last session has come into operation to improve the health of women, young persons, and children employed in the manufactories, and the education of such children. The period of employment is to be either from 6 to 6, or from 7 to 7 o'clock; the employment not to be continuously longer than four hours and a half without half an hour for a meal, except on Saturdays, when the employmen, is not to be beyond half-past 1 o'clock. Two hours each day, save on Saturday, to be allowed for meals, and one hour before 3

o'clock. There are provisions in the New Act as to education and school attendance. Employment during meal time is strictly prohibited.

THE ROBIN REDBREAST.

In Devonshire the redbreast is called the "Farewell Summer." In Wales he is considered, like Prometheus, the victim of his own philanthropy—of his love for the race of man. Not only the "Babes in the Wood," but mankind at large, if the Welsh legend be true—are indebted to this deserving favourite. How could any child help regarding the little bird "with bosom red" with affection, when assured "That far, far away is a land of woe, darkness, spirits of evil and fire, and that day by day does the little bird bear in his bill a drop of water to quench the flame, and so near to the burning stream does he fly that his dear little feathers are scorched, and hence he is named 'Bron rhuddyn'; and that to serve little children the robin dares to approach the infernal pit, and that no good child will hurt the devoted benefactor to man?" The robin returns from the land of fire, and therefore he feels the cold of winter far more than his brother birds. He shivers in the wintry blast; he is hungry, and so he chirps before your door. Oh! my child, then in gratitude throw a few crumbs to Poor Robin Redbreast."

The Yorkshire country people have a real horror of killing a robin, and with good reason, for they say, and firmly believe, that if a robin is killed one of the cows belonging to the person will give bloody milk. And it is said for a fact that a young farmer at Borobridge was determined to try and see if this bit of "folk-lore" could be verified. With this intent, one day he shot a robin purposely; when, lo! the next morning his uncle's best cow, a healthy beast of some twelve or thirteen years, gave half a pailful of red milk, and did so for three days in succession—morning and evening. The liquid was of a pink colour, which, after standing in the pail, became clearer, and when poured out there was found a deep red sediment at the bottom. The same superstition is likewise prevalent in Switzerland. The robin there alone of all birds enjoys immunity from the ready gun of the Alpine herdsman, who believes the same tradition with our own John Brodie, of Yorkshire, respecting the cows, should a robin be killed on his pastures.

In France, likewise, the robin meets with mercy at the hands of the sportsman, who is generally anything but sentimental; while the Breton peasant holds him in positive veneration. Mr. Chambers, in his "Book of Days," says, "The Robin is very fortunate in the superstitions which attach to him. 'There's a divinity doth hedge a robin,' which keeps him from innumerable harms." In Suffolk there is a saying, "You must not take robin's eggs; if you do you will have your legs broken, and accordingly those eggs on long strings, of which boys are so proud, are never to be seen in that country; and one that kills a robin is sure to be unlucky." For "He that hurts robin or wren will never prosper, boy or man." "How badly you write," was one day said to a boy in a parish school; "your hand shakes so that you can't hold your pen steadily! Have you been running?" "No," replied the lad, "it always shakes since a robin died in my hand; it is said, if a robin dies in any one's hand, that hand will always shake."

Evil results, however, do not seem to have always followed the killing of Robin. "Who killed Cock Robin?" was the indignant and popular inquiry. "I," said the sparrow, as bold as brass, without any apparent compunction of conscience, "I killed Cock Robin." As the sparrow did not even attempt to palliate his action by alleging the unhappy result to have been accidental, but even freely acknowledged with what weapon it had been effected, we fear that it was a wilful and cold-blooded murder. True, that "all birds of the air fell sighing and sobbing when they heard of the death of poor Cock Robin."

Yet still in this case we do not learn from subsequent history that any retributive justice fell upon the shedder of Poor Robin's blood. It is said of the redbreast that if he finds the dead body of any rational creature he will cover over the face at least, if not the body with leaves. The burial covering, with leaves, of the children in the wood, and the play of "Cymbeline," are supposed to have given birth to the tradition; but this charitable office, however, which these productions have ascribed to Robin, is of very early date, for in Thomas Johnson's "Cornucopia" (1596) it is related that "Robin, if he finds a man or woman dead, will cover all his face with moss, and some think that if the body should remain unburied that he would cover the whole body also."

F. Q. N. D.

SCIENCE AND LONGEVITY.—The obituary list read at the anniversary meeting of the Royal Society

furnishes another instance, if another be wanted, that science is favourable to longevity. The total number of deaths within the year—i.e., from November 30, 1872, to November 30, 1874, was 14. Of these three were under 70 years; five, Sir W. Jardine, Sir J. R. Martin, Professor J. Phillips, Sir F. Smith, and E. H. Stirling, were between 70 and 80; five between 80 and 90 years; and one, Sir G. Rose, 94 years. Looking at the last five, we see that Sir John Hennie died at 91, Professor R. E. Grant at 12, Sir W. Fairbairn at 83, and Dr. Arnott and the Rev. J. W. Bellamy, each at 86. These are remarkable facts, suggestive of matter for consideration. The present number of the society is 525, of whom Sir Edward Sabine is now the father. He was elected a Fellow in 1818, and is the last of the men elected within the second decade of the century. Of Fellows elected within the period 1820-1829 there remain 18 who now take rank as veterans. Among them we remark the names of Thomas Ball, Dr. Bosworth, Sir John Davis, the Duke of Devonshire, the Earl of Enniskillen, Earl Stanhope, the Dean of Salisbury, Sir J. G. S. Lefèvre, Sir G. Lyell, Sir Woodbine Parish, Mr. G. P. Scrope, Sir G. Shuckburgh, and Sir R. Vyvyan. In this list of veterans Sir J. Lefèvre takes precedence, having been elected in 1820.

FACETIE.

ON DUTY.—England expects that every man will do his duty. And England expects that every man will pay his duty if he keeps a carriage or a manservant.—*Fun.*

A PROMPT EXCUSE.

"Boy, why don't you go to school?"

"Cause daddy is afraid that if I larns everything now, I shan't have anything to larn when I comes to the 'cademy."

THE REASON WHY.—At the seaside last year ladies did not bathe as usual. The persons interested financially in their doing so assert it was because it took the ladies so much time to put on their paint again.

BEFORE-HAND.

Smith (who has just perpetrated an atrocious pun): "I say, Brown, that's not bad for me, is it? Before you time, old man, oh?"

Brown: "A long while before—about the year 1; before jokes were invented!"—*Fun.*

THE NEW FASHION.—"Le Follet," always worth careful examination, discloses to us that "flounces plaited à coup de vent" are now in vogue. "Clouds" have long ceased to be a novelty; but now we may be on the look-out for ladies in "hurricanes," with gentlemen in pilot-coats in close attendance.—*Fun.*

A SECOND-HAND SCHOLAR.

Little Girl (to old lady): "Oh, Mrs. Smithers, what d'ye think that I know? I know you're coming to the Board school. They're sure to make you, for I heard mother say you were in your second childhood."—*Fun.*

DEGREES IN SORROW.—A tailor dunned a man for the amount of his bill, who replied that he was sorry, very sorry indeed, that he couldn't pay it. "Well," said the tailor, "I took you for a man that would be sorry; but if you are sorrier than I am I'll knock under."

SNOOKY'S boy heard him say the other day that there was money in his, and he proceeded to investigate the old man's poultry-yard. He had gone through a dozen fine specimens when the old man descended upon him, and the boy now wonders if there is any balm in Gilead.

HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS.

Mistress of the House: "I've some important letters I want taken to the post, Prudgera. Have you finished dinner downstairs yet?"

Butler: "Not yet, mam; the 'ongtrays' is just a goin' in."—*Fun.*

WHAT'S IN A NAME?—Jones, whose wife's maiden name was Eliza, confided to his destined biographer the fact that he once (and but once) after wedlock indulged himself in an allusion to a certain evil personage as the "father of 'Lize." Since that he has found it more conducive to mutual confidence to call people by their right names.

A STERN SENSE OF DUTY.

(Scene: A cold day in the country.)

Farmer (to boy who is crying with the cold): "Why don't you get off and lead him?—That's the way to keep warm."

Boy: "It's a b-b-orrried horse, and I'll ride him if I freeze."

AN ENTHUSIASTIC DISCIPLE.

Our artist has become a thorough convert to the views Mr. Rawlinson has so eloquently expounded in the *Times*. On the roof of his house, well wrapped up in a waterproof ulster, with his back against the kitchen chimney-stack, and his feet comfortably packed in a "Civil Service Supply" hamper, he evolves a tropical landscape out of the depths of his

inner consciousness, and has never felt so happy in his life.—*Punch.*

A BROWN OR A BOY?—"What is your business, my friend?" said Mr. O.—O., Q.C., to a rough-looking specimen of Wicklow rurality. "Sure," said the latter, "didn't Tim Dumfooley's wife tell me yer honour was wanting a boy?" "And do you call yourself a boy?" asked the barrister. "Why, do I look like a girl?" was Pat's quick rejoinder.

OVER-WORKED.

Cousin Kate: "Are you coming to skate with us to-morrow, Fred?"

Fred: "Well, I don't know. Awfully busy just now. Have to be at the office about one—then there's luncheon at two, and don't get away till past three.—*Punch.*

A WICKLOW labourer, who had been doing some work for a clergyman, was asked to take a dram. After he drank it he looked at the glass and said, "Can your honour tell me how they make them glasses so late?" The clergyman gave him the information how glass was blown. "Arrah sure, thin," said Paddy, "he must have been mighty short i' the wind that blew that glass."

AGREEABLE TO ANYTHING.

An Irishman being about to join a company forming during the American Civil War was asked by one of the officers:

"Well, sir, when you get into battle will you fight or run?"

"And, faith," replied the Hibernian, "I'll be after doin' as the majority of yess does."

BRIDGET was hired in a female boarding school, and was told to ring the first bell at six in the morning. At half-past six the pupils were required to attend prayers; but for several mornings after Bridget commenced her labours many were unusually tardy, giving as an excuse that they did not hear the rising bell. "Sure, marn," said replied, "I never rings it very hard, for fear I might wake the young ladies!"

APPLE-PLEXY.

An Irishman was asked at dinner whether he would take some apple pie.

"Is it houlsome?" inquired *Teddy*.

"To be sure it is. Why isn't it?"

"Because," said *Teddy*, "I once had an uncle that was killed with the apple-plexy, and sure enough I thought it might be something of the same sort."

THE BRIDAL BREAKFAST.—At a recent wedding, according to a report, "the jellies upon the bridal tables were pure amber masses of quivering translucence, catching the wine-coloured prisms of perfumed light, and holding them in tremulous mirrors of rosy beauty." That's enough to send a man off to propose to the ugliest woman he knows, on the bare chance of having such things as that for breakfast.

THE CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN.

Rector's Daughter: "Now, Tommy Smith, tell me how it was that John, surnamed Lackland, signed Magna Charta?"

Johnny Brown (after a pause): "I know."

R. D. : "Well, Johnny, how was it?"

Johnny: "Please, miss, they took him to Runny—Run—Runnymede, miss, and so he signed at once. My father's plessoman, miss."—*Fun.*

MONEY'S WORTH.—"You pull teeth here I suppose?" inquired a green-looking customer who dropped into a dentist's shop for information. "Yes, sir, take a chair," replied the proprietor, "my charge is only half-a-crown, and I can do it instantly." "Well, I'll wait till I get home, for I can't pay that price, because our doctor only charges a shilling, and it takes him two hours; besides, he drags you all around the room, and you get the worth of your money."

CHOICE THOUGHTS.

Makes a good serenade—the music of the spheres. The easiest court to practise in—the court of a lady.

Fact—a pudding that is wholly done is also half done.

The fellow who went into business has run out again. Probably didn't like it.

The fellow who picked his way no doubt had something sharp in his hands.

COMMERCIAL.

First Shoe-Black (from Cheapside): "Bet yer a shillin' of it!"

Second Shoe-Black (from West End): "Ah—you ain't got bob!"

First Shoe-Black: "Very well—if I loses I can likkido by arrangement. That's fair!"

Second Shoe-Black: "Don't know; may do in the City! We don't understand it down here!"—*Punch.*

BEEF TEA.—A Scotchman was once ordered "beef tea" by his physician. The next day the patient complained that it made him ill. "Why, man," said the doctor, "I'll try the tea myself." So, putting some in a cup, he warmed it, tasted it, and told the patient it was excellent. "Man," says the patient.

"is that the way ye sup it?" "What other way should it be supped? It's excellent, I say." "It may be good that way, doctor, but try it w' the cream and sugar, man! try it w' that, and then see hoo' ye like it."

"Dove?"—The following amusing incident occurred on the North London Railway: A short time since a passenger remarked in the hearing of one of the company's servants how easy it was to "do" the company, and said he had travelled from Broad Street to Dalston Junction without a ticket. "Any one can do it—I did it yesterday." When he alighted he was followed by the official, who asked him how it was done. For a consideration he agreed to tell him. This being given, "Now," said the inquirer, "how did you go from Broad Street to Dalston Junction yesterday without a ticket?" "Oh," was the reply, "I walked."

NOT SO OLD, NEITHER.—An old chap, residing here (says a correspondent), who might be classed as of the genus "Scalawag," who was too lazy to work, but picked up a living by pettifogging, and other means more or less equivocal, was caught by a neighbour with a rail on his back, which he had just appropriated from said neighbour's fence for firewood. "Hullo! you old scoundrel!—what are you stealing my fence for?" was the salutation he received from the owner. The old fellow turned round, rested one end of the rail on the ground, and replied, without the least embarrassment, "I ain't such a sight older than you are, you meddling old idiot?" Then deliberately shouldering the rail, he carried it home. Slightly the "wrong tack!"

SLIGHTLY PUZZLING.

We have a friend who finds it difficult to pronounce the letter *R*. Meeting him on one occasion he said:

"Wobert, have you heard of the gweat wist on the Bwristol Woad?"

"A what?"

"Why, a wiot, a wiot."

"What is a wiot?"

"Don't you know what a wiot is? A wiot is a wumpus."

"Well, now, what is a wumpus? You have got me again."

"Why, you know what I mean—a wiot, a wumpus, a wow."

"Oh! oh! a riot! Yes, yes; I have heard something of that."

A GOOD MARKET FOR OLD HATS.—It is said that the inhabitants of the Nicobar Islands, a group in the Indian Ocean about 150 miles south of the better-known Andamans, have a universal passion for the cast-off hats of civilization. There is a regular trade in old hats between Calcutta and the Nicobars. The value of the article is measured in cocoanuts, the only produce of the islands. The chimney-pot is the favourite shape, the taller the better; and the summation of Nicobarian desire is to have a "cabman's"—that is, a white hat with a black band round it. Such a hat is worth from fifty to fifty-three cocoanuts, and is the favourite attire of the noble savage when he goes fishing, clad for the rest only in the usual waist-cloth, which makes the slight difference between him and a cabby.

ADVICE FOR THE NEW YEAR.

To the Clerk of the Weather: Thaw.

To All the Theatres: Draw.

To Stockbrokers: Don't be Bears.

To Irishmen: Don't make Bulls.

To Smokers: Cut Cavendish and Clay.

To Whistplayers: Stick to Clay and Cavendish.

To Learners of the Eton Latin Grammar: "Bos, fur, sus,"—Beef, pork, and a fur coat.

To the Committee for Decorating St. Paul's: Study Wrens' Nests.

To the King of Spain: Get Spain out of her Bonds."

To Marshal MacMahon: Hold on.

To Prince Bismarck: Don't be too amiable, for the sake of your sentimental Emperor and suffering country.

To the Pope: Try and be fallible for a change.

And to the Lord Chamberlain: Open an Office in Great De-Corum Street.—Punch.

A COOL CUSTOMER.—The following incident is said to have occurred in a restaurant:—A man recently entered the place, and ordered a very elaborate dinner. He lingered long at the table, and finally wound up with a bottle of wine. Then lighting a cigar he had ordered he leisurely sauntered up to the counter, and said to the proprietor, "Very fine dinner, landlord; just charge it to me; I haven't got a sou." "But I don't know you," said the proprietor, indignantly. "Of course you don't. If you had, you wouldn't let me have the dinner." "Pay me for the dinner, I say!" "And I say I can't." "I'll see about that," said the proprietor, who snatched a pistol out of a drawer, leaped over the counter, and collared the man, exclaiming, as he pointed at his

head, "Now see if you'll get away with that dinner without paying for it, you scoundrel!" "What is that you hold in your hand?" said the impudent customer, drawing back. "That, sir, is a pistol, sir!" "Oh, that's a pistol, is it? I don't care a fig for a pistol; I thought it was a stomach pump."

ANECDOTE OF VERDI.—When Verdi was putting the last touches to "Il Trovatore" he was visited in his study by a privileged friend. The friend was one of the ablest of living musicians and critics. He was permitted to look at the score and ran over the "Anvil Chorus" on the pianoforte. "What do you think of that?" said the master. "Trash!" said the connoisseur. Verdi rubbed his hands and chuckled. "Now look at this, and this," he went on. "Rubish!" said the other, rolling a cigarette. The composer rose and embraced him with a burst of joy. "What do you mean?" cried the critic. "My dear friend," replied Verdi, "I have been making a popular opera. In it I resolved to please everybody except the purists, the great judges, the classicists, like you. Had I pleased you I should have pleased no one else. What you say assures me of success. In three months 'Il Trovatore' will be sung and roared and whistled and barrel-organized all over Italy."

THE WINDOWS OVER THE WAY.

It often and often seems to me
That I one-half of the world can see
In the windows over the way;
One-half of the pleasures, half of the pain,
The joy and the sorrow, the loss and the gain
Of the rich, the poor, the sad, and the gay,
In the windows over the way.

With folded hands and a haughty face,
There sits false pride in her chosen place,
At her window over the way;
And farther on, in a quiet nook,
Sweet modesty reads from her morning book,
Her fair young cheek like the flowers of May,
In the window over the way.

There, just on a range with my humble room,
Where the rose geranium bud and bloom
In that window over the way,
Sits a childless widow that lost, ah! me,
Since this time last year, the children three—
The frolicsome things that used to play
At the window over the way.

And up and down, and here and there,
I see the joy, the hope, the care,
In the faces over the way;
The lonely man, the woman true,
The young, the old, the happy few
That come and go in life's great play,
At the windows over the way.

M. A. K.

GEMS.

NEITHER flatter yourself nor permit others to flatter you.

SUCH is the force of imagination that we continue to fear long after the cause that produced the fear has ceased to exist.

LIVE, according to the Arabic proverb is composed of two parts—that which is passed, a dream; and that which is to come, a wish.

THERE is no occasion to trample upon the meanest reptile, nor to crawl to the greatest prince. Insolence and baseness are equally unmanly.

HE who combats his own evil passions and desires enters into the severest battle of life; and if he combats successfully obtains the greatest victory.

WITHOUT decision of character no man or woman is ever worth a button, nor can never be. Without a man becomes at once a good-natured nobody, the poverty-stricken possessor of but one principle, that of obliging everybody under the sun, merely for the asking.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CHAMPAGNE CAKE.—One egg, one cupful of sugar, one-third cupful of butter, one-half teaspoonful of soda, one teaspoonful of cream of tartar, two tablespoonfuls of sweet milk, two cupfuls of flour; to be seasoned with nutmeg.

HOW TO ADMINISTER RAW MEAT AS FOOD.—It is sometimes desirable, or even necessary, to give patients raw meat, and in most cases the difficulty of getting people to take it is very great. The following mode is a process of M. Yvon's, and meat so prepared can be taken either in a solid or liquid state: He takes of raw beefsteak 250 parts; blanched white almonds, 75 parts; bitter almonds, 5 parts; white sugar, 80 parts. The almonds are first blanched, and then pounded up with meat and sugar

in a marble mortar, so as to obtain a homogeneous paste. To obtain a nice-looking product, and to retain at the same time a few fibres which may have escaped the action of the pestle, this paste may be reduced to pulp. When it has undergone this process it is of a pale pink colour, and has a very agreeable flavour, not in the least like raw meat. It will keep without change for some time, even in summer, if it be placed in a cool, dry place. If it be desired to give it a liquid form, it will be enough to dilute a certain quantity of it with water, according to the degree of fluidity required. The emulsion may also be prepared at once as follows: Raw meat, 50 parts; blanched sweet almonds, 15 parts; bitter almonds, 1 part; white sugar, 16 parts; all are pounded in a mortar as in the first formula; the quantity of water needed is added by degrees, and all is then passed through a sieve. Whichever mode of preparation be adopted the emulsion will keep for at least four-and-twenty hours; and when it separates, at the end of that time, a slight shaking will re-establish the suspension. Some yolks of eggs will make this emulsion more nourishing. M. Tailler, the head apothecary at the asylum of Quatre-Marc-Saint-Jon, employs the following preparation for the insane patients to whom it is necessary to administer raw meat: Grated raw meat, 100 parts; powdered sugar, 40 parts; wine 20 parts; tincture of cinnamon, 3 parts. The sugar is incorporated with the raw meat in a marble mortar, and then the wine and tincture are added. A mixture like marmalade is obtained, having an agreeable flavour, and possessing all the requisites of a tonic and reviving diet.

STATISTICS.

WRECK STATISTICS.—The wreck statistics for the first six months of the year 1873 show that the number of lives lost from wrecks, casualties, and collisions on or near the coasts of the United Kingdom during the first six months of 1873 is 728. This is 138 more than the number lost in the whole year 1872. The lives lost during the first six months of 1873 were lost in 98 ships; 78 of them were laden vessels, 11 were vessels in ballast, and in nine cases it is not known whether the vessels were laden or light; 82 of the ships were entirely lost, and 16 sustained partial damage. Of the 728 lives lost, 81 were lost in vessels that foundered, 340 through vessels in collision, and 122 in vessels stranded or cast ashore. The remaining number of lives lost (179) were lost from various causes, such as through being washed overboard in heavy seas, explosions, and in missing vessels. The enormous increase in the loss of life in so short a period is accounted for by the fact that 119 of these lives were lost in wrecks and casualties which, although they happened before 1873, are included in the returns, the reports having been received too late for them to form part of the statistics of their respective years; 298 lives also lost through the sinking of the ill-fated "Northfleet" help to swell the number. It appears from the return that 83 vessels were not heard of after sailing or being spoken at sea, in which 1,025 lives are supposed to have been lost. Of these missing vessels 78 belonged to the United Kingdom, involving the loss of 844 lives, and five belonged to British possessions abroad, involving the loss of 841 lives; 14 were steamships, involving the loss of 844 lives; 52 of these vessels sailed from ports in the United Kingdom, 14 from ports in British possessions abroad, and 17 from foreign ports; 71 were laden vessels, four were vessels in ballast, one was a fishing vessel, and in seven cases it is unknown whether the vessels were laden or in ballast. Many of the missing vessels sailed previously to 1873, but were not reported until that year.

MISCELLANEOUS.

IT is rumoured that the Pope will present the Golden Rose to the Queen Dowager of Bavaria.

A SERIES of experiments has lately been made by the Russian Government with reference to the use of electricity for the head-light of locomotives.

Two tame white elephants have been sent down to Rangoon by the King of Burmah to be forwarded by steamer to Europe, as a present to the King of Italy.

The sapphire ring thrown out of the window at Richmond by Lady Scroop to Robert Cary, and used as a token of Elizabeth's death to James VI, now forms the centre of a diamond star in the possession of the Countess of Cork and Orrery.

DEATH OF M. MERCIER.—On December 19th died in Paris M. Mercier, at the age of 81, the last surviving pupil of Regnault, the painter of "The Education of Achilles." M. Mercier had been director of the musée of Angers, and to his exertions is due the excellent collection of the works of David d'Angers.

